HELPS
FOR
Faith and *Patience*
IN
Times of Affliction.

In Three Parts.

VIZ.

I. *Sampſon*'s Riddle ſpiritualiz'd.
II. Orthodox Paradox: Or, The greateſt Evil working the greateſt Eternal Good.
III. Heaven and Earth epitomiz'd: Or, Inviſibilities the greateſt Realities.

By *James Burdwood* late Miniſter in *Dartmouth*.

To which is added,
A ſure Tryal of a Chriſtian's State, by *John Flavell*, late Miniſter (alſo) in *Dartmouth*.

LONDON,
Printed by *T. W.* for *Jonathan Robinſon*, at the *Golden Lyon* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard, 1693.

TO THE

Religious, and my very dear Kinſwoman,

Mrs. *Mary Cholwich*,

Of *Hele* in *Cornwood*, in *Devon*.

AND

To the reſt of the Family, related by the Bonds of Grace and Nature; the Author of the enſuing Diſcourſe heartily wiſheth encreaſe of all Grace here, and the fulneſs of Glory hereafter, through the Merits of our Dear Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

THE many multiplied Favours you have continually ſhewed to my ſelf and Family, obligeth me to make this acknowledgment thereof, by preſenting to you all this little Teſtimony of my true Love

and real Gratitude, humbly praying for your kind Acceptance and diligent Perusal. Let me mind you, and my ſelf no leſs, That we are come towards the Evening of our Days: The Contents of this Book, by the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, may help us in making due preparation for our latter end; in which, I doubt not but you are daily engaged. The Sun of our Life is going down on our outward man: You, my moſt dear Kinſwoman, as well as my ſelf, have been kept ſeveral Years upon the Graves mouth, and have been many times brought back from the brink of the Pit: Oh, that the Sun of Righteouſneſs might ſhine on our inward man, that therein we may be *renewed day by day*. Our God hath tryed our Faith and Patience, and made us more than ordinary Monuments of his Mercy and Goodneſs; oh, that He would make us Inſtruments of his Praiſe and Service: What further Tryals our Heavenly Father will call us unto we know not; may it pleaſe him to help us, that our Faith and Patience may have their perfect Work: He will have Glory, and we ſhall be Gainers. It hath pleaſed our good GOD to call us off from the enticing, lying, dy-

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ing Vanities of this preſent Evil World, for our advantage, I hope; what have we to do now, but to *give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure.* 'Lord, pardon 'former negligence, and help us to get 'on the Wedding-garment of Chriſt's 'Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, that we 'may bid our bleſſed Bridegroom wel-'come.

To the reſt of my Honoured Couſins.

May I obtain the Favour from you to ſpend a little of your little unexpired time in reading this ſmall *Book*, and pray for a *Bleſſing* on what you read.

I am ſure the Contents do nearly concern you all: You are all travelling to another Country, Eternity is at hand, your Account is near, Time is precious, ſo are your Souls; the World is vain, the Heart is deceitful: Oh, could I prevail with you to ſpend ſome time in cloſe Self-examination, in conſtant heavenly Meditation, in Watchfulneſs, in Self-denyal and Mortification, you would much engage me, and advantage your own Souls. I pray the *Bleſſing of God* may go along

with this poor piece; there are many have better Heads, and better Hearts may do better.

Now, that you all, and your Relations old and young, may be taken into the *Covenant of Grace*, and may grow up in all things in Christ Jesus; that after our wearisom Pilgrimage in this Wilderness-World, we may at last enter into the Promised Land, and enjoy that everlasting Rest, purchased by the most precious Blood of our deerest Lord, and there live with him for ever, is the earnest Prayer of

Your very affectionate and

much obliged Kinsman,

Aug. 1. 1693.

James Burdwood

TO THE

Honeſt-hearted Reader.

INſtead of an Epiſtle (which for want both of outward and inward ſtrength, having been tryed with about Eight or Nine Years Sickneſs, and moſt part of the time confined to my Chamber and Bed, I cannot perform) I ſhall only preſent you with the ſeveral Points of Doctrine handled in the enſuing Treatiſe, having ſome time ſince caſt one Mite into the Church's Treaſury, viz. *my* Hearts Eaſe, *do now adventure to caſt in this other, though very unworthy to be laid up among ſo many choice Pearls: But I remember,* who will not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things. *Had I not been unfaithful in the improvement of the Talents my Great Maſter had entruſted me with, I might have had more. I humbly beg the fervent Prayers of ſuch Readers as truly love the Salvation of Souls, to pray the Lord to pardon all my fooliſhneſs and negligence in the Work of the Lord, through the moſt precious Blood of the*

most precious Lord Jesus Christ, without which I perish; and which is all I beg of them for my self.

Now, having been a long time disabled to say or do any thing for the edification of others, and not likely to be of any use any more in this World, I was willing, while I could hold my Pen, and in any measure compose my Mind, much broken by Affliction, to emit this into the World, with my poor, yet earnest Prayers, That the Blessing of the Lord will go with it; as also, to testifie my Gratitude to Him who hath wonderfully delivered me from so many Deaths, and yet doth deliver, and graciously supports me under so many multiplied Afflictions; for which I hope, through God's great Mercy, and Christ's precious Merits, I shall have cause to bless God to all Eternity.

Readers, pray for a Blessing on what you read, and for

Your affectionate Friend and Servant

in any thing for your Souls good,

whilst I am

From my Sick Chamber, Aug. 1st. 1693.

J. B.

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Gentle Readers, If you meet with some little Miſtakes, or Miſpointings, I pray excuſe the Author, being ſo far from the Preſs, and not in capacity exactly to review the Copy; but in the exerciſe of your Charity towards him, and by your Prayers on what you read, you may, by God's Bleſſing, find Benefit; which is the earneſt deſire of

Your Servant, J. B.

THE

Publiſher to the Reader.

THE Pious Author ſent this Treatiſe to the Preſs ſome time ſince; but before it was finiſhed, it pleaſed God to take him out of a ſtate of great Tryals and Afflictions, into a ſtate of Glory and Happineſs; ſo that his Friends may entertain this as a Funeral Sermon, *prepared by his own hand; in the ſerious reading of which, they will find that he experimentally felt, and truly practis'd the ſubſtance of this Book*, viz.

1. *That he found a great deal of Comfort in ſanctified Afflictions; and that as his outward man decayed, ſo his inward man was* renewed day by day.

2. *That the light and ſhort Afflictions of this Life did work for him* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.

3. *That becauſe all viſible things are temporal, and of no long continuance,*

there-

therefore his Heart was not engaged in them; nor was he too much concerned for them, or about them.

4. *That having a right and true judgment of Earthly things, he was thereby much supported under all his sore Afflictions.*

5. *That he did most seriously mind, and his Heart was most diligently fixed on unseen and eternal things; and that,*

6. *The due minding of, and meditations upon* unseen *and* eternal things *did much support his Soul in all his Sufferings in this World, and made him long for the full fruition of that God, who is now his Portion for ever.*

I pray God succeed this Treatise, and sanctifie the loss of such excellent and holy men to us all, particularly to the Town of Dartmouth, *which in less than Three years time, hath been deprived of Three Great Lights,* viz. *Mr.* Flavel, *Mr.* Burdwood, *and Mr.* Chapman.

FOOD

FOOD
FOR
Faith and *Patience*:
OR,
SAMPSON's Riddle
Spiritualiz'd.

PART I.

2 Cor. iv. 16.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward Man perish, yet our inner Man is renewed day by day.

IN these words we have a Divine Cordial to prevent the fainting of God's People, under the troubles of this Life; commended to us, from the experience of the Apostles and Primitive Christians. For although the words may

have a reference to what goeth before, unto some other grounds and means of comfort and support which they had (as I have largely discourſed of elſewhere) beſides this; yet this was one ground of their comfort and ſupport, that they gained by their loſſes; Their Souls proſpered, while their Bodies waſted; what they loſt in the outward Man, they gained in the inward Man, and for this cauſe they fainted not: and wherever this is found by experience, it will be a ground of ſupport and comfort. Now that this truth of God (ſo proper and pertinent to my preſent Condition, which is a periſhing of my outward Man) may be a means to ſupport and uphold me, to the praiſe of my God: I have pitcht my thoughts upon it, and humbly begging the gracious aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, that I may rightly underſtand the mind of God in it, and rightly apply it to my own Soul, and may find and feel the power of it, and by Faith ſuck out the ſweetneſs of it, to my ſupport and conſolation: now ſeeing thoſe evil days are come upon me, wherein I may truly ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them; praying alſo, that theſe my Meditations on this Text may be uſeful to them into whoſe hands they may fall.

The Doctrinal Concluſion I obſerve from the Words is,

That it is the Comfort and the Character of truly gracious Perſons, that as their outward Man doth decay, decline and periſh; ſo, their inward Man doth revive, increaſe, and is renewed.

Four Things are to be explicated, which will fully open the Text, and demonſtrate the Propoſition.

1. That in Man there are two Parts, an outward and an inward Man; and what theſe are.

2. The

2. That the outward Man is subject to declining, decaying and perishing; it cannot be avoided nor prevented, but it must be so: and that the inward Man is capable of increasing, growing, and renewing.

3. That the decaying, decreasing and perishing of the outward Man, in gracious Persons, through the great Goodness and Grace of God, tendeth unto the increasing and renewing of the inward Man; and what influence the one hath upon the other to effect the same.

4. That this is the Comfort and the Character of truly gracious Souls.

First, that there is an outward Man is obvious to sense: That we have Bodies of flesh and blood and bone is evident enough: This is the Shell, the Carcase, the Bark of the Man, as I may say; but there is an inner Man also, which every body doth not believe; for too many live and walk in so much care and fear, with so much sollicitousness about the outward Man, the Body, and the provisions and accommodations of it, that the inner man is totally neglected; whose whole care is for the Body, as if they had no Souls at all to mind or care for: And oh! that God would pardon and purge this guilt from my Soul through Christ's Blood; but we must know there is an inner Man also *Rom.* 7. 22. *Ephes.* 3. 16. And the Scripture speaks of Wisdom in the inner parts, *Job* 38. 36. And of truth in the inward parts, *Psal.* 51. 6. and God promiseth to write his Law in the inner parts *Jer.* 31. 32. This inner Man, is the Man of the Man, the Kernel, the Jewel, the Treasure. But more particularly,

By the *outward Man*, I understand the Body, and all the concernments and accommodations thereof; all that tends to the preservation and conveniences

veniences of it: Animal-life, Livelyhood, Bodily-Endowments and Comforts; Health, Strength, Beauty, Eaſe, Liberty, Friends, Relations, Eſtate, and whatſoever tends to the outward Welfare of the Body; Food, Phyſick, Recreation, Reſt, &c.

By *the inner Man*, I underſtand the Soul and all its faculties, the ſpiritual, inviſible part of Man, and all the concernments and accommodations of it; and all that conduceth to the Life and Livelyhood of the Soul; to the Preſervation, Health, Strength, Safety, Liberty and Advantage of it; all its Graces and Comforts; all that belongs to the *inner Man*, to its Being, and well-being.

As for the Qualities of both, they are theſe.

1. As for the Body, ſimply and ſingly conſidered for the fleſh and blood, the Scripture gives us many Epithetes of it: as, *Houſes of Clay*, *Earthly Tabernacles*, *Duſt and Aſhes*, *earthen veſſels*, &c. And theſe Bodies are.

1. *Vile bodies. Phil.* 3. 21. becauſe made of vile and baſe materials; ſubject to vile diſeaſes; to vile abuſes; to vile abominations; and to a vile diſſolution at laſt; ſowen indiſhonour, ſhall end in Corruption; great hinderances to the Soul many waies.

2. The *outward Man* is the mortal Man, that of Neceſſity muſt dye and return to duſt, from whence it came; this cannot poſſibly live alway: There is an irreverſible Sentence of Death paſt upon it. *Hebr.* 9. 27. and for theſe reaſons, the Body is the worſt part of Man; the worſt by far; and ſhould be leaſt eſteemed: and ſuch as is the Body, even ſuch are all bodily Comforts and Accommodations; Health, Strength, Beauty, Liberty, Friends, Honours, Eſtate, &c. all mortal, mutable, decaying, fading, dying things: daily experience confirmeth this: I need ſay no more. 2. Be-

2. But for the *inner Man*, the Soul, that is 1. Precious; ſo precious, that it is more worth than all the World. *Math.* 16. 26. *Pſal.* 49. 8. having the bleſſed Image of the glorious God ſtamped on it at firſt; being capable of knowing and injoying the true and living God; and when ſin had ſpoil'd and captivated it, it could not be redeemed, but by the precious Blood of the Son of God. So are all the Concernments of the Soul precious alſo. 2. It is immortal alſo; it never dies, it lives for ever: None can, nothing can kill the Soul; that is, cauſe it not to be: and for theſe reaſons, it is the nobleſt, chiefeſt and beſt part of Man; and hence alſo the Concernments of the Soul are more excellent, more noble and precious than thoſe of the *outward Man*; the Graces and Comforts, the Strength and Beauty of the Soul; the Priviledges, and Peace, and Wellfare of the Soul are more excellent and precious, as will more appear in the next particular.

2. The ſecond thing to be conſidered is, That the *outward Man* is ſubject to decline and periſh. The Body it ſelf; all its Beauty, Strength, Health, &c. is ſubject to decay. The Bodies, even of the beſt Saints, that ſhall one day be made like unto Chriſt's glorious Body, are ſubject to vile Infirmities and Diſeaſes.

What is become of *Sampſon*'s Strength, and *Saul*'s Beauty? *Job* and *David* will tell us of their decays in all theſe; their Friends, Eſtates, Relations; their Health, and all their outward Comforts failed them; and how can we poſſibly hope, that we ſhall keep them? All outward things are dying Vanities; we are all of us travelling to the Land of forgetfulneſs. They that live longeſt go the far-

theſt way about; and they that dye ſooneſt, g
the ſhorteſt way home. Our greateſt Care ſhou
be, to be ſure, that we are in the right way
Eternal Life.

But now, the *inner Man* is capable of growi
increaſing and renewing; *our inner Man is renew
day by day*, ſaith the Text: Grace and Peace, Sp
ritual Life, inward Strength and Comfort, are c
pable of increaſing. For

1. This God commandeth; That Chriſtia
ſhould grow and increaſe, 2. *Pet.* 1. 5. and 3. 1
and that they ſhould abound and go forward,
be ſtrengthned.

2. This is God's Promiſe to his People; th
they ſhall grow and flouriſh, *Pſal.* 92. 14. *Ia*
14. 40. 29, 30, 31. They that wait on the Lo
ſhall renew their ſtrength.

3. This is the Character of a gracious Soul
Prov. 4. 18. and 24. 5. *Coll.* 1. 10. and 2.
Eph. 4. 16. And this the Apoſtle prays fo
1 *Theſſ.* 3. 12. and 4. 16. 3 Epiſt. *John*
This the Soul is capable of; being deformed
ſin, and God's Image defaced on it, it is capab
of being renewed, and of having God's bleſſ
Image repaired on it; which is begun in Rege
ration, and is ſtill carried on, and promoted
God's Ordinances and his Providences, his Spi
working in them, and with them upon his Peopl
All afflictions being intended for, and ſanctifi
unto this end; to make Souls more and more li
unto Jeſus Chriſt. Thoſe weaknings and peri
ings of the *outward Man*, being, by the love a
wiſdome of God, deſigned to ſtrengthen, repa
and better the *inner Man*; that the Soul may
made, and muſt be made more holy, more hu
ble, more heavenly, more like God: it muſt gr

up in all things like unto Christ; *Ephes.* 4. 12,13. The Soul, the *inner Man*, may, and must get more strength against Corruption and Temptation; it must get more Victory over the World, and over it self; it must grow in self-denyal, in faith, in patience, in hope, in Communion with God; it must increase in knowledge and experience; it must get nearer God; and more weaned from the World, and better prepared to put off this earthly Tabernacle of the Body: Wherefore is the Christian train'd up in Christ's Schools, his School of Ordinances, and of Providences; but that the Soul, the *inner Man*, may be made better? That Grace may grow; for it is the Growth of Grace, that evidenceth the Truth of it. And why doth our heavenly Father chastise us in our outward Comforts, but to better us in our *inward Man*.

But, before I proceed, let me pause a little, and commune with my own heart: O my Soul! Thou hast been under the blastings and witherings of thy *outward Man*; these many years thou hast been in the School of Correction: Thy God hath made many breaches upon thy earthly Comforts; stript thee of thy dearest Relations, of thy Liberty, of thy Estate, of opportunities of serving thy God in thy place; deprived thee of thy Health and Strength, *&c.* yet hath he dealt with thee, infinitely better than thy Sins have deserved. It is his mercy thou art not consumed; not in Hell, not in thy Grave: but O my Soul! what art thou the better for all those strokes upon thy *outward Man*? What hast thou gained by all thy losses? It is true, Afflictions are dry Rods, and my heart, a dead heart; there can be no blossoms, nor fruit, without God's Blessing, and the Word and Spirit's working in and by Affliction: but what blessing

upon all thy troubles canſt thou diſcern? What good to the *inner Man* have theſe afflictions done thee? Art thou more ſenſible of the evil of Sin? more weary of it, and more grieved with it? Is thy Heart more tender, thy Spirit more humble, thy will more ſubdued to Gods will? Art thou more Crucified to the Creature; thy inordinate Affections mortified; thy unruly Paſſions ſubdued? Art thou more meek and patient? Are thy Affections raiſed, and more inlarged after God, and Chriſt, and Heaven? Is Jeſus Chriſt more precious to thee? And doſt thou pant and thirſt more after the manifeſtations of his Love to thy Soul? Art thou more watchful over thy thoughts, words and actions? More careful to pleaſe God, more fearful to diſpleaſe him? More tender of his Honour? More ſenſible of the Afflictions of *Joſeph*? More diligent in holy Duties? More frequent in Self examination, in heavenly Meditation, in heavenly diſcourſe? Art thou, O my Soul, aſhamed of, and grieved for thy former Miſcarriages, thy miſ-ſpending time, Breath, Liberty, Strength? *&c.* More diligent in preparing for thy Diſſolution; and more contented with thy preſent Condition? Doſt thou endeavour now to go to the Fountain for all Supplies? And doſt thou labour with all thy might, in the ſtrength of God, to make up all thy loſſes and breaches in God, and in his Covenant through Chriſt? Doſt thou prize the promiſes, and laboureſt to live upon them by Faith? Is God and Chriſt more in thy thoughts and affections than heretofore? And doſt thou labour to get out the bleſſing of thy Afflictions, and art moſt earneſt with God for the bleſſing? Doſt thou labour to caſt all thy care upon God, and to truſt him with all? If any of theſe things appears, let God have all the Glory; and bleſſed

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be God for any weak desires after these sweet Fruits. Deny not what God hath done for thee; but be ashamed and grieved, that thou art no better: Cry to God mightily, wrestle with him for his blessing upon thy afflictions.

3. The third Particular is, That the Decaying and Perishing of the *outward Man* to God's people, tends to the strengthning, the prospering and renewing of the *inner Man*. The Adversity of the Body proves the Prosperity of the Soul, to all gracious Persons, and to them only. The Soul and Body of a Saint, is like the House of *David* and *Saul*; as the one grows weaker and weaker, the other grows stronger and stronger; and where it is so, there is good ground of Comfort under all outward troubles; and where it is not so, there is little ground of Comfort for the present: although, there may be a growing in the Soul, when it is not discerned; as there is of the Babe in the Womb, and of the Corn in the Earth, under the Clods; both grow, even when they are not discerned; but in due time will appear. But more of this afterward.

Quest. But how comes this to pass? What Efficacy and Influence have the perishings of the *outward Man*, to help forward the increasings of the *inward Man*? How the Sicknesses, Pains, Troubles, Losses, Crosses upon the *outward Man*, should greatly contribute to the Strengthning and Renewing of the *inward Man*, is the Question; which great Truth resolved, clearly apprehended, firmly believed and experienced, will tend very much to a poor Christians Consolation.

Anſ. 1. By the Decays and Witherings of the *outward Man*, thoſe Hinderances are removed, which did very much obſtruct the Growth, Strength and Comfort of the *inward Man*. When *David's outward Man* flouriſhed; When he had his Honour, Health, Eaſe, Liberty, and the confluence of earthly Comforts about him; he was weak in his Soul, that lay languiſhing in ſinful Security; he was ſo weak in his Soul, that he could not reſiſt the leaſt Temptation; but was ſhamefully conquered by the glance of his Eye. Ordinarily, our Souls are in the worſt caſe, when our Bodies are in the beſt caſe: It is pity (we ſay) that fair weather ſhould do hurt: yet ſo it is. The welfare of the *outward Man*, tends to the ill-fare of the *inward Man*, without a more than ordinary meaſure of Grace.

For *firſt*, Ordinarily, the Proſperity of the *outward Man* interpoſeth betwixt God and the Soul, and keeps God at a diſtance from the Soul; and the Soul at a diſtance from God: Jeſus Chriſt loves not to lye in their arms, who embrace other Lovers. God will be uppermoſt, or not at all; nearest the heart, or not at all there. He deſerves Both, and will have the Beſt, or will accept of nothing.

While the *outward Man* is fixt on the Creature, the *inner* is not far off from it; and then it is ſoon divided from God. 2 *Cor.* 5. 6. While the Soul is at home in the Body, it is abſent from the Lord; and the reaſon is, Becauſe of that power the Body hath upon the Soul, to draw it down to it ſelf, and even ſink it into it ſelf; and to participate with it. It is hard for a poor Bird to flye that hath weights tyed to his feet; and harder for a poor Soul to Mount up, or indeed to move with any ſpeed heaven-ward, that hath ſuch a weight of Clay hanging on it. And this made godly Agur afraid of fulneſs. *Prov.* 30. 8, 9.

Uſual

Usually, Prosperity begets Pride; and Pride sets us at a distance from God; God resisteth the proud: he sees the proud afar off. Christians are never so far from God, as when they are nearest to their outward Comforts and Enjoyments. God is then but in few of their thoughts: Now it is the Presence or Absence of God, that makes Summer and Winter in the Soul; as it is the presence and absence of the Sun that makes Summer and Winter on the Earth. Now, if Prosperity does withdraw our hearts from God, (as too often it doth) it causeth God to withdraw from us, (though we may not find him wanting while earthly Comforts continue with us) it must needs do us a great deal of hurt; for if God withdraw or withold the influences of his Grace from us, our Souls must needs be in a sickly and languishing condition! How weak and feeble must we be, when God doth not continue his Grace to us? Prosperity lies betwixt God and our Souls; which we all know by woful Experience: and our God, our gracious Father knows it, and therefore, in tender love to our Souls, many times breaks our outward Prosperity, that our Souls may not be drown'd in it, and perish by it.

2. *Secondly*, The welfare of the *outward Man* hinders the *inner Man* from that serious, diligent, hearty intent, and Spiritual Service, that it should perform to God: in which the Soul might have had many sweet meetings with God, and many Communications of Love and Grace from him; which, through the defects of his duties, are suspended from him. *Isai.* 64. 5. and this must needs tend to the weakning of the Soul. What Strength, Life, Comfort, have God's People found in holy Duties? How have their Souls been refresh, their

Hearts raiſed, and quickned, and enlarged after God many times? but then they have been ſerious, earneſt, fervent in Spirit in theſe Duties. Now in Proſperity, what careleſs, heartleſs ſervice do we perform? How ſoon weary? ſecretly glad when the work is over? How ready upon the leaſt occaſion to neglect a Duty, or an Ordinance? Not ſo fearful to diſpenſe with ſome Service that God calls for; nor ſo fearful to draw nigh a Temptation. O, how cold, dead, and heartleſs are we in Duty? All this is too true, O my Soul, ſee it, lament and bewail; and bleſs the Lord for time to do it, and bleſs him more for an heart to do it.

What bad ſervice did *Manaſſes* do to God? Or, rather what great ſervice did he do the Devil, when he was in his proſperity? never minding his God, or his Soul, till his outward man periſhed.

3ly, It hinders communion with God, which is the very life of gracious Souls, their Heaven upon Earth: Communion with God in holy Ordinances, and holy Duties; as Prayer, Praiſes, Meditation, *&c.* is that which fattens and proſpereth the Souls of God's people; but outward proſperity hinders communion with God in theſe; for then, even while outward comforts are preſent, God, and his company, and preſence, are not ſo much found wanting, nor ſo much valued, deſired, and panted after, as in a barren Wilderneſs, where no waters of worldly comforts are, *Pſalm* 64. 1, 2, 3. *Pſalm* 42. 1, 2, 3. When *David* was in great ſtraits, ſtript of his earthly Comforts, bedewed all with Tears; then his Soul panted after God: when he was in the Valley of *Baca*, then he looks unto the Mountains of Myrrh, the Garden of Spices, *Pſalm* 84. 1, 2, 3, 4. Is it not

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ſo with God's People? when their Liberty, Friends, Health, Eſtate, &c. are gone; then God is ſought for, and communion with him, earneſtly longed and thirſted for, more than ever; and then uſually moſt enjoyed.

By Acts of Communion with God, Souls converſe, commerce, and trade with God, trade in Heaven, and that turns greatly to their advantage: We can never take a Voyage to Heaven by Prayer or Meditation, but it will turn to account firſt or laſt; ſome gain to our Souls will accrue by every act of communion: We cannot touch Chriſt by our Faith or Love, but ſome Vertue will flow from him to our Souls, *Pſalm* 145. 18. *God will fulfil the deſires of them that fear him: He will ſatisfie the hungry with good things. Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs.* Every groan of a gracious Soul after Grace, every pant and breathing after God in truth, is obſerved and recorded in Heaven. Mal. 3. 16. *A book of remembrance for them that thought upon his Name.* O, the tranſcendent goodneſs of our moſt gracious God, to take notice of ſuch poor things! *He will not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things:* and what an encouragement is this to us, to ſpend our moſt ſerious thoughts on God: But Proſperity in the World, doth ſtop and interrupt the Soul's converſe and trade with God; by eſtranging the heart from God and heavenly things, and ſo it becomes very prejudicial to the proſperity of the inward man. It is very hard for a man to have much of the World in his hands, and much of Heaven in his heart alſo: to have much converſe with, and much enjoyment of Creature-comforts, and to have his Converſation in Heaven too. And when do our Souls thrive and flouriſh beſt, but when we

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are trading above, converſing with God?

Now theſe great Miſchiefs, I have named, to the *inner man*, are promoted by the proſperity of the *outward man*; thus:

1. By making us forgetful of thoſe things that we ſhould neceſſarily remember, in order to the good of our Souls: Proſperity ſpoils the Memory exceedingly, as to heavenly and ſpiritual things, and that in theſe particulars.

Proſperity breeds, 1. Forgetfulneſs of God, the chief good; and ſurely that Soul can never thrive that forgets God, who is the Fountain of all its Life, Grace, and Comfort. The remembrance of *God* brought ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction to *David*'s Soul, *Pſalm* 63. 5,6. but Proſperity makes us forgetful of *God*, *Deut.* 6. 11, 12. and *Deut.* 8. 14, 15, 20. Yea, fulneſs of outward things makes men to deny *God*; of which good *Agur* was afraid, *Proverb.* 30. 9.

2. Forgetful of their beſt part, their Souls; the Soul is then moſtly forgotten, when the Body is moſtly minded.

3. Forgetful of their Duties to *God* and *Man*; ſo it was with *Pharoah*'s Butler.

4. Of the Affliction of *Joſeph*, *Amos* 6. 6. When we our ſelves are at liberty, how apt are we to forget them that are in Bonds.

5. Of Sin; that uſually is moſt remembred in time of Affliction, as in *Joſeph*'s Brethren.

6. Of *God's Word*, that is too much forgotten in Proſperity; the Precepts of *God* not obeyed, nor the Promiſes ſo reliſhed and believed, nor Threatnings feared.

7. Proſperity makes us forgetful of Death, Judgment, the World to come, Eternity: The Evil Day is put far off.

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All these Seven Things should be always remembred by us, and have our frequent Thoughts and Meditations; for the remembrance of them is very advantageous to the welfare of the *inner man*, and will tend to the good of our Souls; but the flourishing of the *outward man* breeds too much forgetfulness of all these things; and the forgetfulness of these things, drives us from *God*, and *God* from us, keeps us at a distance from him, casts him out of our Minds and Thoughts, makes us unserviceable to him, and hinders our communion with him.

2ly. The flourishing of the *outward man* begets Pride, Wantonness, Security, Envy, Ambition, Contention, negligence in *God's* Service, contempt of others, and many hurtful Lusts, *Deut.* 32. 15. Experience proves this.

3ly. It consumes precious Time and Strength, wastes the Spirits, Thoughts, and Affections, being placed on earthly things, which should all be spent on *God* principally, and but so much on other things, as may fit us for his Service, and in subordination to him: But while men are contriving how to get, how to manage, how to spend, &c. This fills up their Time, Hearts, Thoughts, Minds, Spirits and all; so that there is no place nor room left for *God*, or the concerns of their Souls: Therefore the *wise God* in great Love and Mercy to the Souls of his People, breaks their *outward Prosperity*, which otherwise would ruine their Souls, removing those things that hinder the welfare of the Soul; for when outward Prosperity is gone, then the Soul flies to *God*, it draws nigh to *God*. Prosperity kept it at a distance before; it forgot *God* before, now it remembers him, seeks *God* early, serves him diligently: Now

it ſeeks communion with *God*, pants after his Favour, and the ſenſe of his Love: Now the Soul is awakened and enlightned, and now it remembers *God*, and it ſelf, and *Sion*, and its former miſcarriages; it now minds Death and Eternity more ſeriouſly than ever, and is more diligent in preparation for them; and now the Soul that lay languiſhing and pining before, while the *outward man* flouriſhed, begins to be in a thriving way; for theſe things promote the welfare of the Soul. And this is the firſt way, how the periſhings of the *outward man* help towards the renewing and ſtrengthning of the *inner*.

Secondly, The Adverſity of the *outward man* promotes the Proſperity of the *inner*, by being a means of bringing in Light and Conviction into the Soul: Proſperity ſhuts Men's Eyes, and deafens their Ears; but *vexatio dat viſum*, Affliction opens Men's Eyes, ſo that they ſee what they did not before; and they ſee things otherwiſe than before: dark Diſpenſations bring Light with them. Afflictions put *God's* People upon the ſearch, *Lamen.* 3. 40. Then they retire and look within themſelves; then they find out the filthineſs, vanity, frowardneſs, pride, earthlineſs of their own hearts, more than ever they ſaw before; then they find and feel their Spiritual Wants, Diſeaſes, Dangers, the treachery, falſeneſs, deceitfulneſs of their own Hearts; their often grieving, quenching, reſiſting of *God's Spirit* in time of *Proſperity*; their inordinate Self-love, Fleſh-pleaſing, and Gratifyings: then they ſee their former ſpiritual ſloth and negligence, their backwardneſs to, and wearineſs in *God's Service*; their formality, deadneſs, cuſtomarineſs in holy Duties; their impatience of reproof, their haſtineſs of Spirit, their

want

want of tenderneſs towards, and of ſympathy with thoſe that were afflicted; not weeping with thoſe that wept; their cenſuring and judging others; their want of Charity: then they ſee how badly they improved their healthful and youthful time; their Talents, and their Enjoyments, with many other Evils are diſcovered.

As alſo in times of *Affliction*, there is a diſcovery of the vanity and emptineſs of the Creature: when all Comforts of Life fail; as Health, Wealth, Friends, Liberty, Eſtate, *&c.* then the Soul is convinced of the vanity and uncertainty of all theſe: The Rod diſcovers both Heart and Life, and what the Creature is; And alſo, then the Souls of *God's People* come to ſee the ſurpaſſing Excellency of *God* and *Chriſt*, and of the *Promiſes*, and of the great Importance of the things of the World to come; O, now the Soul can prize an Intereſt in *God*, and in his *Chriſt* and his *Covenant*: and is hereupon ſtirred up to mind *God* more, and Heaven more; and to beſtir it ſelf in the uſe of all Means, and to get Aſſurance of an Intereſt in *God*. Now all this tends very much to the Welfare of the *inner man*; and if we well and wiſely conſider this Benefit which our merciful Father grants us, by blaſting and withering our *outward Comforts*; thus to enlighten and convince us of all thoſe things, we ſhall have cauſe to Adore and Admire his Goodneſs towards us, in taking ſuch a courſe with us, and to cry out with *Job* 7. 17, 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldeſt magnifie him? and that thou ſhouldeſt ſet thy heart upon him? and that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?*

Thirdly.

Thirdly, The Adversity of the *outward man* promotes the Prosperity of the *inner man*, by taking away the *Idols of the Soul*, which divided the Soul from *God*: The best of us are apt to make *Idols* of every Creature-enjoyment, very apt to let out our Heart in inordinate Affection to Husbands, Wives, Children, &c. and suffer them to have more of our Hearts, Loves, and Delights, than *God* and *Christ*, and *Heaven*; over-prizing and over-loving them; taking too much content in them, and expecting too much from them; and so make *Idols* of them; and then *God* withdraws his gracious Influences from us, those quickning, strengthning, and comfortable Influences of his Spirit from us, and hides his face; and then our poor Souls languish, and we grow weak and feeble; so it was with *David*, *Psalm* 30. 6, 7. but this withdrawing of *God* from us, we do not many times perceive and feel, while our earthly Comforts continue with us; though our Graces be weak, Faith and Love weak, our Passions and Corruptions strong, and are too often too hard for us, and we are carried captive by them; and although we decay in spiritual strength, and grow dead in holy Duties, careless and watchless in our Conversations, and want that vigour, spirit, and life, which sometime we had; which are the effects of the absence of *God's* Spirit; that we grow cold in our Affections to heavenly things: I say, these sad effects of *God's* withdrawment from us, are not perceived and felt by us so long as our bodily Comforts continue with us; but then it pleases our gracious *God* to send some awakening Providences upon us, he sends Adversity, and removes these our *Idols*; and then through *God's* assisting Grace we come to see our sin, and the fruits of it,

then we see our folly, in letting out of our Hearts upon the vain Creature, and that then *God* did withdraw, and that our Souls did wither and languish; upon which, by the special Grace of *God*, we lament our folly, beg forgiveness through the blood of Christ; and the Lord, being gracious and merciful, returns to the Soul again; and then the Soul begins to recover it self, and to grow better.

Fourthly, Adversity is a means of bringing afresh to our Remembrance those particular special Sins which in Prosperity were forgot; and which, while they lye on us without Repentance, they waste and weaken, hurt and corrupt our Souls. *Adversity* (as was said before) puts *God's* People upon the search of their Hearts and Lives: now they say unto themselves, what have we done? now their Spirits do, or should make diligent search; now they do, or should commune with their own Hearts, and examine their ways, and seek for the plague of their Hearts; their *Dalilah's*, their *Jonah's*, their darling, their beloved Sins, which they did not, or would not see in their Prosperity, nor were willing to be reproved for, but did over-look them, or forgot them, or look'd on them as little ones, and common Infirmities, humane Frailties; and could study shifts to cover and excuse them: Such as Pride and Passion, inordinate Affection, Unthankfulness, Hypocrisie, Covetousness, Selfishness, vain Thoughts, idle Words, Omissions, Unfaithfulness, breaking Vows and Promises; Earthly mindedness, Security, hardness of Heart, unprofitableness under the means of Grace, and many other Heart-evils that scarce appear

appear in time of *Prosperity*; that in time of trouble upon a through search we may find out; as our Unbelief, want of love to *God* and *Christ*, want of love to *God's Word*, insensibleness of Sin, and want of hatred to it; want of fervent Charity to others; with many others: which upon a conscientious search, and by the help of *God's Spirit*, we shall find out in our selves, which lay hid in us, corroding and putrifying our poor Souls; which were never so heartily confess'd and lamented as they should. But when the *Spirit* and the *Word* comes with Affliction, there is a discovery made of those lurking Lusts, the filthy corners of our false Hearts opened; and every gracious Soul is willing to be convinced of every sin, and begs *God* heartily to search him, and to rip him up, and to shew him all the Evils of his Heart and Life, with all their aggravating Circumstances, being committed against much Love and Light, against Conscience, Conviction, Resolution; after many Confessions of them before the Lord; and many times those Sins are brought to remembrance, which were quite forgotten; as sins of Youth, fleshly Lusts, excess in Meat, Drink, Apparel; Disobedience to Parents, mispending Time, foolish jesting, rash Anger, sinful Silence, Cowardize in *God's* Cause, neglect of Reproof, neglect of relational Duties; Sabbath-sins, with multitudes of others, which will appear upon a diligent search; many omissions of Spiritual Duties; as Heavenly Meditations, Self-examination, self-denial, Watchfulness; all which the gracious Soul being convinced of, repents of, mourns for before the Lord; and by Faith in the blood of Jesus, obtains Pardon of them, and by the Spirit of Jesus obtains power against them; and so the

Soul

Soul being pa[illegible]ned and healed, recovers, and is renewed day by day; whereas before it lay pining and languishing: this blessed fruit is produced by the blessing of our most gracious *God*, upon the pinings and wastings of our *outward man*.

Fifthly, By disingaging and weaning the Hearts of *God's* People from all the things of this World, mortifying and crucifying their Affections to things below; drawing off the Heart from Creature-comforts, weaning the Soul from those dry Breasts. In *Prosperity*, the best of us think little on Mortification, and on crucifying the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts of it; although the very Life and power of true Christianity lies in these; as *Rom.* 8. 13. *Galat.* 5. 24. but then we are for pleasing and gratifying the flesh. Oh, how tender are we of our flesh, and how loth to be cross'd? how deeply are our Affections engaged to the Vanities of the World? how do our Hearts cleave and cling to the Creature, even as our Skin to our Body? how seldom do we think seriously of parting with our Relations, our Health, *&c.* or of putting off our earthly Tabernacles, and of our lying down our Heads in the dark Grave? How are we afraid of Dangers to our *outward man*, and troubled at evil tydings? how thoughtfully careful to preserve our Creature-comforts with us, not taking so much care to enjoy *God* in them, and to enjoy them for *God*, as to enjoy them our selves, and for our selves? How near do they lie to our Hearts? Now our loving Father seeing all this, he takes it very ill at our hands, that the Creature should be so near and dear to us, and have so much room in our Hearts; and therefore in love to our Souls, blasts and

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waſtes theſe our Comforts, to draw off our Hearts from them, that we may not ſet our Affections upon them.

Sixthly, The periſhing of the *outward man* furthers the flouriſhings of the *inward man*, not only by bringing our Sins to our remembrance, (as was ſhewed but now) but alſo as being a means of *God's* appointment and bleſſing, both to purge away Sin paſt, and to prevent Sin for the future; as *Iſa.* 27. 9. the Lord ſpeaking of Afflictions there, upon the Church, ſaith, *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged*; and this is all the fruit, to take away his Sin. O bleſſed deſign of our good and gracious *God*: O bleſſed fruit. So *Job* 33. 17, 18. To withdraw man from his purpoſe, and to hide Pride from Man. Are not many of *God's* People ſenſible of this? how that by their Afflictions they have been kept from many Sins that without their Afflictions, they had been liable to have fallen into and committed? Surely they will acknowledge it, and give *God* thanks.

Sin is the Sickneſs and plague of the Soul, which corrupts the Spirit, wounds the Conſcience, weakneth Grace: now in time of *Proſperity*, when there is no Plague nor Sickneſs in Town or Country, but all things belonging to the *outward man* flouriſh, even then, is the very Air moſt ſpiritually infectious, and moſt places there, and moſt people breath then moſt infectious; then the contagion of Sin ſpreads moſt: let a man then go in what place he will, in to what Company almoſt he will, his Soul is in danger of infection by Sin, what Contentions, Pride, Envy, Slandring, Backbiting, unjuſt Dealing, and at beſt, but vain, idle unprofitable Diſcourſe is to be heard among moſt

and how little of promoting the power of Godliness, or mutual edification: Now, in such a time the poor Soul gets falls and wounds, gets many a disease and Spiritual distemper; which it perceives not: now it gathers much Rust, much Dross; and it may carry the infection of sin a long time, and is weakned and wasted by it; which, it may be, others see by him more than himself; his Passions and Corruptions get ground upon him, and he pines day by day: he grows more worldly, froward, proud, &c. and yet perceives it not; and thus the *inner Man* is much damnified, by the advantages of the *outward*. All this, the wise God seeth and observeth, and out of his pity and tender compassion to the precious Souls of his poor Servants; seeing them thus captivated by their Corruptions, and diseased with so many spiritual Distempers, and that they stand in great need of Physick, lest they should perish, thinks fit to break their worldly prosperity, to give them the bitter purge of affliction; to cast them into the Furnace, that they may be purified and purged, and so recovered and saved. *Zachar.* 13. 9. Thus *God* ordereth the fire of affliction as a means to cleanse and purify his people from their filthiness, and to make them pure and white. *Dan.* 11. 35.

Seventhly, By exercising the Graces of *God*'s people, which in time of their prosperity, were as it were laid asleep, and for want of use and exercise did decay, and scarce appear: for, it is not Grace in the habit, that doth so much comfort the Soul, as Grace in exercise: now, Adversity serves to draw out Grace into act and exercise; as Faith, Repentance, Hope, Patience, and other Graces: now if ever, the Christian labours to put forth his faith

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on *God* in *Christ*; and on the Covenant and Promises: Oh! now, *God* and *Christ*, and the Covenant and the promises signify something indeed to the Soul; to these, the poor Soul now flies, as it was with *Micah*, 7. 7. When all outward Comforts failed, then he acted his Faith, Hope and Patience: I will look unto *God*, I will wait for the *God* of my Salvation, my *God* will hear me. So *Habb.* 3. 17, 18. Then also, *God*'s People renew their Repentance search their Hearts and Ways, and turn to *God*, as *Ephraem*, *Jerem.* 31. 18, 19. And then they act their Hope upon the promises of future Glory; and then their Patience appears, and stands them in great stead; and their tender-heartedness, their love to *God*, his Word and People; their contempt of the World; yea, every Grace is exercised mostly in time of affliction: and this is the rare and special excellency of true Grace, that it thrives most and prospers best in the worst time for the most part: Grace is strengthned and fattened, when sensible Comforts are withered and starved; and thus the *inner man* is renewed, when the *outward* doth decay and perish.

Eighthly, The perishings of the *outward Man* help forward the flourishing of the *inward*, by making room and place, and preparation in the Souls of *God*'s People, for the gracious Communications of Spiritual Mercies to them: as is evident from the Scripture, *Hos.* 2. 6. and 14 compared. The Creature-enjoyments stood in the way before, filling up all the room in the Hearts; now these must be removed, to make way for better Mercies; the too-well-beloved guests must be discarded, that the King of Glory may come in. Other lovers had the heart before, these must be divorced, that the

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Lord Jesus may the more fully and sweetly manifest his love to the Souls of his people: See Mr. *Burr.* on the Second of *Hos.* Verse 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. There are many heavy Judgments threatned; the taking away all the Comforts of the *outward Man*: Where, we may note *God*'s absolute Soveraignty over all our enjoyments, and his propriety in them all: So *Ezek.* 16. 18, 21. All we have is the Lord's; and his gracious, sweet and blessed ends and purposes in threatning and executing those terrible things, and that is wonderful; as Verse 14. Therefore, Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderness, and speak comfortably to her. It was to make way for the communications of glorious Mercies.

The gracious *God* hath gracious Ends, in all his taking Providences towards his poor people; to make the wastings, fadings, totterings, perishings of their *outward Man*, to prove helpful to the increasing, prospering and flourishing of the *inner Man*.

Outward Takings make way for inward Givings: I will take away (saith *God*) all her Lovers, dry up all her Cisterns, that I may open to her the Fountain. I will strip her naked of all her outward Comforts, that I may speak comfortably to her Soul: Now I will allure her; now I have brought her into the Wilderness; now my poor peoples hearts are taken off from the Creature, I will see now to win them to my self. I may now win their love and gain their hearts to me, seeing they are stript of the earthly comforts.

O what support should this be to *God*'s afflicted people, O, that we could believe it and improve it; that *God*'s design in all his takings from us, is but to make way, that he may bestow greater and

better Mercies upon us: This Argument our Lord used to comfort his Disciples with, *John* 16. 6, 7. Of all earthly Comforts, the bodily presence of Christ with his Disciples was the best; yet, he tells them, he must leave them, and withal assures them for their comfort, that it was for their advantage, and that it was expedient for them that he should leave them, that the Comforter might come, which should abundantly supply his absence; and who would not come to them, if he did not go away.

This would be enough to quiet and comfort us in all sinking providences, that these takings are intended to make way for the giving of Spiritual Mercies, if our unbelief, distrust, despondency and impatience do not hinder.

Oh, could we but drink in this truth, and firmly believe it, that *God*'s takings from us, are in order to his givings to us; as *God* took from *David* an Infant begot in Adultery, and gave him *Solomon* in its room; and that his Castings of us down, are in order to his Raisings of us up; his witherings of our outward intended for the renewings of our inner; how patiently and comfortably should we bear our troubles; yea, and how fervently should we pray, that *God* would bring to pass all those his gracious purposes upon our Souls.

I shall conclude this particular by setting down an Instance of our times, which I had from a Person of Quality and Honesty; tho' I never use to record Reports, but this, upon the credit of the relator, I shall for once, and it is very remarkable.

There was some years since, in *London*, a very Godly Gentleman and his Wife, who had a very fair Estate, both of them very zealous professors of Religion;

Religion; eminent for Piety and Charity; who had lived together many years, but had never a Child, which they much desired, and often sought the Lord to build their Family for them; and at last, God was pleased to give them a Son, to their great joy; which lived and grew up to be three or four Years Old, exceeding fair and witty, very delightful and pleasant, tractable and teachable; and they having but this one Child, their affections were much set upon him; and likely too much: The Husband and Wife lived exceeding lovingly together, insomuch that many observed their sweet Carriage to each other; he being of a lovely disposition, and every way well bred, and a Man of good Parts, and of an Holy Life; so amiable and tender to his Wife, that her Life was even bound up in his: In the midst and height of this their Prosperity, the Gentleman falls Sick and Dies; which was so heavy a stroak to his poor Wife, that she could not bear up under it: her Spirit sinks, and she refused to be comforted: many Prayers were put up to *God* for her in the publick Congregations; and many pious Ministers and godly Friends visited her, to Comfort her, but to no purpose; for she had no regard to her self, or did care to Eat or Drink, but for meer necessity, but would sit in the Chimney-corner all day, sighing and weeping, and hanging down her head, seldom giving an answer to any body: Upon a certain day, some godly Ministers with Christian Friends by agreement, met at her House to Fast and Pray, and seek *God* for her; and it came to pass, that after they had ended their work, walking up and down where this disconsolate Widow was; her lovely Child playing there in the Room, (of whom she took no notice) had got a Joint-stool; and carrying it up and

down, at last he turns the Stool upside down, and immediately fell or thrust himself into it, no Person present knew how; but the Stool and the Child overturning together, the Childs head being downward, he brake his Neck; they sent presently for Physicians and Chirurgeons, but the Child died presently; and no means would avail at all, to get so much as one breath from him; which was most amazing and astonishing to all the beholders; the Chamber being then full: The poor Mother sat there all this while in her usual posture, but when she saw her Child was really dead, she arose up, and before them all, uttered these words, or words to this purpose; most of them are the very words: O! blessed Jesus, will nothing please thee but the heart of thy poor Creature, and the whole heart, and the whole love; now take it, Lord; take it, thou hast won it, thou art worthy of it, I give thee my whole heart; Lord, take it, take it, fill it with thy Love, and possess it for ever. And from that very moment, she was filled with joy and comfort, and walked very chearfully and comfortably several Months, even until *God* took her unto himself. Here we see the truth of what I have been treating of; the Lord made the blastings and breakings of her *outward Man* the means of refreshing and comforting her *inner*. I should not have set this down, but that I depend upon the Credit of the Relator. O Lord! how unsearchable are thy Judgments, and thy ways past finding out!

4. The last particular proposed, was that, for a Christian to be renewed in the *inner Man* when the *outward Man* doth decay and perish, is the Character and Comfort of gracious Persons. That it is their Character, appears, because the contrary is true of wicked Persons; they are curs'd in Soul, with

cross

croſs'd in Body; their outward periſhings prove inward periſhings alſo; for then, uſually they murmur and repine; fret againſt *God* and Inſtruments; then, they think of ſinful ſhifts and unlawful means to get out of trouble; when their *outward Man* is hurt by affliction, they hurt their Souls by ſin; by impatience and diſcontent, as that wicked King, who ſaid, what, ſhall I wait upon *God* any longer? but now we find the ſervants of the Lord, as *Eli*, *David*, *Job*, *Micah*, *Habakkuk* and others, when their outward comforts failed them, then they ſubmitted to the will of *God*, fled to him for ſupplies, truſted in him, and ſo by the exerciſe of their Faith and Patience, their Souls were ſupported and ſtrengthned. *David* expreſly confeſſeth that it was good for him, that is, for his Soul, his *inner Man*, that he was afflicted. *Pſal.* 119. 71. And in the Text, we have the atteſtation of the Apoſtle and Primitive Chriſtians.

And this is the comfort alſo of *God*'s People, that their greateſt outward evils, through the goodneſs and bleſſing of *God*, turn to their greateſt inward good: and this makes them rejoyce in afflictions, and glory in tribulations; as *Rom.* 5. 2. to wit, becauſe of the Spiritual benefit they receive by afflictions, and upon this very ground, *God* gives that command, *Heb.* 12. 12. *Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down:* that is, therefore be comforted and encouraged. Therefore, wherefore? becauſe of the great profit and ſweet fruits of *God*'s chaſtnings upon his People: *Therefore lift up the hands that hang down.* As it is a comfort to a Man that hath a Wound in his Body, to have his Cloths torn off, that ſo his wound may be healed; ſo it is to have the diſeaſes of our Souls cured, tho' our outward comforts be rent and torn from us.

The Application.

I. *For Information.*

First, Hence it appears, that there is a great difference between the Godly and Ungodly, in reference to afflictions, between the upright and the hypocrite: The godly are the better, the wicked are the worse for affliction. The godly Man gains in his *inner Man*, by his losses in his *outward Man*; but the wicked in their afflictions commit more wickedness, and their Corruptions break out more to the ruine of their Souls: The Righteous holdeth on his way, altho' Briers and Thorns, yea Lyons be in his way, that tear and spoil all his outward Comforts; and he that hath clean Hands and a clean Heart, groweth stronger and stronger even when his *outward Man* grows weaker and weaker: *Job* 17. 9. The wicked in affliction are like the troubled Sea, that casts up nothing but mire and dirt. *Isa.* 57. 20.

Secondly, That an afflicted godly Person is in a far better case than an afflicted wicked Person, tho' the affliction be of the same kind, measure and degree; because an afflicted godly Person hath far better grounds of Comfort than the other; for the godly Man may be confident that his affliction of his *outward Man* shall tend to the good of his Soul, but the ungodly hath ground enough to fear, that he shall be the worse for his affliction: the wicked shall grow worse and worse. Tho' all things may happen alike to all, as to outward afflictions; yet the godly have the best on't upon this account, that their outward afflictions shall tend to their Inward Spiritual and Eternal Good: O, happy are the People that are in such a case, that no Winds can blow

blow amiſs to them; but that all the croſs and contrary winds that they meet with, upon the Stormy Sea of this World, ſhall but further them in their Paſſage, and haſten them to their Harbour in Heaven. Bleſſed be the Lord our God: *Amen.*

Thirdly, Then, a gracious perſon hath more and better ground of Patience, quietneſs and Contentation under all his afflictions than a wicked Perſon hath; becauſe every gracious Perſon hath good ground to hope, believe and conclude, that, his good *God* is doing him good, doing his Soul good, by all the troubles on his *outward Man*; and having ground to hope, believe and conclude ſo, he hath good ground of Patience and Contentation. Now a Child of *God* hath good ground to hope, believe and conclude ſo; becauſe he hath the faithful word of the true and faithful God, for to ground his Hope and Faith upon; who hath ſaid, that all things ſhall work together for good to his People: if all things, then afflictions; *Rom.* 8. 28. And that all things are theirs; 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. things preſent, all their preſent ſufferings and troubles are theirs; that is, ſhall work for their Spiritual good: and *God*'s word tells us expreſly, *Hebr.* 12. 10. that all our chaſtiſements are for our profit, our greateſt profit; namely, to make us partakers of *God*'s Holineſs; to purge away our Sins, *Iſa.* 27. 9. to make us conformable to Chriſt; and to fit and prepare us for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, 2. *Cor.* 4. 17. Here we have a ſure word of Promiſe; the *God* of Truth, who cannot Lye, the Almighty *God*, (who is able to perform his promiſes; which promiſes flow from his everlaſting Love and unſearchable goodneſs & mercy, and are founded in the full ſatisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt, in whom they are

made, and through whom they shall be fulfilled; to assure us of the truth of them.) I say the Almighty *God* hath engaged his word, that all the sufferings of his Children shall work for the good of their Souls; which is a most firm ground of Patience, Contentation and Consolation to them. When I can believe and be perswaded in my Soul, that all my afflictions shall promote the welfare of my Soul, I have all the reason in the World to be patient and content under them: Our great care must be to look to this, that we be the Heirs of the Promises; and if we be in Christ, really united to Christ, grafted into him, made partakers of his Spirit, Life, and Grace; then are we the Heirs of the Promises, *Hebr.* 6. 17, 18. *Gal.* 3. last: and we being the Heirs of the promises, we have grounds of Patience, because *God* hath promised all shall work for our good: and then next, that we may be able with patience to bear our afflictions, we must labour to keep these promises still in our eye, looking to them, and to the love, goodness, faithfulness and all-sufficiency of *God* in them, and looking unto Jesus, through whose satisfaction and mediation they come to us, and labouring to keep our Eyes, the Eyes of Faith and Hope, fixed on those promises, trusting in *God*, and relying upon him; and so shall we be able in our Patience to possess our Souls: and Patience will do us great service in affliction. for altho' it cannot keep us from misery, it will keep us from being miserable: for we can never be miserable, so long as we have an interest in Christ, and through him, in the promises. Now Faith in the promises is both the breeder and feeder of Patience, let Faith live, and Patience will not dye: let Faith be present, and Patience will not be absent; and through Faith

and

and Patience we ſhall inherit the promiſes. Oh, then, let us labour to live by Faith, and ſtrive to keep up our Faith in Act and Exerciſe; and in ſpecial, upon the real Spiritual Good, that our good *God* will bring to our *inner Man*, by the decays and periſhings of our *outward*, he having promiſed ſo to do, and he being faithful who hath promiſed; and let us alſo labour to live in hopes and expectations of that good, praying alſo conſtantly for increaſe of our Faith and Hope, ſo ſhall we be able with Patience to endure to the end, and be ſaved.

Certainly it is every ones concernment, to know and conſider, that Man conſiſts of two Parts, the *inner* and *outer Man*, and which of the two is beſt, and ought to be moſt minded, and principally looked after? for moſt live, as if they had Bodies only, and no Souls; or, if they have Souls, that they need not much minding, but ſay, they leave the care of them to *God*: whereas indeed, it is the welfare, the ſafety and ſalvation of our Souls, that we all ſhould be moſt ſolicious about. *What ſhall it profit a Man* (ſaith our Saviour) *if he gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul?*

Sin is the Diſeaſe of the Soul, and Holineſs the health of the Soul, and afflictions are *God*'s Phyſick to effect this Cure by; ſurely then, we had better take the Phyſick, the Remedy, tho' it make us ſick, than keep our Diſeaſe, which will make us Die, and rot eternally: the Remedy is better than the Diſeaſe. So that when our merciful Father, the only wiſe *God*, ſees, that the blaſtings and breakings of our outward Comforts, are proper means to keep us from, and to purge from us our Spiritual Diſeaſes, our ſins, which not purged would deſtroy our *inner Man*, our Souls; and

therefore uſeth this means, what cauſe have we to endeavour in *God*'s ſtrength, patiently, quietly and comfortably, to bear all our breaches and periſhings of our *outward Man?* yea, and to praiſe and bleſs the Lord, that he will take this courſe with us, thus to chaſten us here in this World, that we may not be condemned with the World hereafter: 1 *Cor.* 11. 32.

Fourthly, It follows alſo from the Premiſes, that wicked Men are fools, very fools, yea, mad fools and cruel to their own Souls, becauſe all their care is for their Bodies, and none at all for their Souls: they provide for the Servant, but neglect the Maſter; provide for the Horſe, but forget the Rider: *Eccl.* 10. 7. We have ſeen, how little care *God* takes of the *outward Man*, but beats and breaks that many times, that he may ſecure and preſerve the *inner Man* of his People.

And alſo wicked Men are cruel to their own Souls: *Prov.* 8. 36. *He that ſinneth againſt* God, wrongeth *his own Soul.* Is it not a madneſs, carefully to preſerve the Box, but loſe the Jewel? to ſpend precious time, ſtrength, thoughts, cares, pains, all Mans days, in feeding, cloathing, preſerving the *outward Man*; but let the poor Soul ſtarve, periſh and be eternally loſt? if there be any cruelty out of Hell, this is a great piece of it.

Fifthly, It follows alſo, that the continuance of outward Comforts is not to be expected. There will be witherings, decays, periſhings of our *outward Man*; it cannot be avoided: our health and eaſe, and peace, will not abide always with us; our deareſt Relations muſt bid us farewel, this our earthly Tabernacle muſt ſhortly be put off; we cannot live always: all things here are mutable and changeable; we ſee this by experience every

moment: our pleasant and lovely Companions in the flesh, our deareſt friends in Chriſt; our Yoakfellows, the deſires of our Eyes, the comforts of our lives; they and we muſt part. *Pſal.* 39. 6. This fully believed, and ſeriouſly conſidered, would unglue our affections from theſe things, and prepare us to part with them; that our parting with them be not ſo grievous to us, as uſually it is. Could we uſe theſe things as we do our Gloves on our Hands, which we can with eaſe pluck off; and not as the ſkin on our Hands, which cannot be pulled off but with much pain and ſmart. It were good wiſdom for us often to look on all our earthly comforts, as things that we cannot long enjoy; as things that we muſt needs ſhortly part with; this my health, my eſtate, my eaſe, my relations, I muſt part with, and I know not how ſoon, a parting time muſt come: This Soul and Body muſt part, and to keep ſuch thoughts in our minds, and often to conſider of it, would help to moderate our affections to them while we enjoy them, and to imploy them for *God*, and alſo it would prevent our immoderate ſorrow for the loſs of them, becauſe we expected ſuch loſſes, and made account of them before they came: but we are too often ſurpriſed, and therefore too often overcome with ſorrow.

Sixthly, It follows from the premiſes, that the Servants of *God* have no true cauſe or reaſon to be diſcouraged, diſquieted or dejected, when their *outward Man* periſheth, their outward Comforts wither, their old Houſe begins to totter and decay; becauſe by all theſe witherings and periſhings of their *outward Man*, their *inner Man* is renewed day by day; and therefore, no cauſe of fainting.

Such as know, that is, are aſſured by Faith, that when this their earthly Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, that

that they have a building with *God*, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, such will not be troubled when their Houses of Clay begin to totter; no, but rather, they groan earnestly to be cloathed upon with their House which is from Heaven. 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3. And that *God's* Servants may thus be willing to put off their earthly Tabernacles, and exchange them for Heavenly Houses. *God* is working upon them, and in them, this willingness, as *Verse* 5, by his Spirit, his Word, and by his Chastisements, breaking and blasting their earthly Comforts, weakning their bodies, to make them willing to leave them, and to long for those everlasting habitations, which their dear Lord hath prepared for them; *John* 14. 1, 2, 3. And for the more effectual working of *God's* People to this willingness, he gives unto them the earnest of the Spirit, which is the earnest of their Inheritance, untill the Redemption of the purchased Possession, *Eph.* 1. 13, 14. and *Rom.* 8. 23. We which have received the First-fruits of the Spirit groan within our selves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Bodies.

Now this Earnest or First-fruits of the Spirit, which in some measure *God* gives to all his people here in this life, to prepare them for Glory, is called also the Seal of the Spirit, *Ephes.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed.* Now, this Seal of the Spirit, I take to be, the saving Works, Graces and Fruits of the Spirit in us; as the Work of true and sound illumination, true Conviction of our Sin and Misery, and of the Creatures Vanity; of our own impotency and utter insufficiency to help or save our selves; and of Christ's Excellency, All-sufficiency and willingness to save all such as come unto

unto him, and are heartily willing to take him for their onely Lord and Saviour; all this is the work of the Spirit: As also, found Conversion from all Sin unto God, as the chief good; the Spirit enabling the Soul to repent and turn to *God*; and also working in the Soul the Grace of Faith, enabling it to come to Christ, to receive him, accept of him, rest upon him, and to resign it self up sincerely to him and to his Government, by his Word and Spirit. The Spirit works Sanctification in the Soul, destroying the old corrupt Principles of Nature, and implanting new Principles of spiritual Life, making it partaker of the Divine Nature; mortifying in it the lusts of the flesh, and quickning it to newness of life; repairing the Image of *God* upon it, and working all those other Graces, which are the Conditions of Pardon and Justification; as true love to *God* and *Christ*, to his Word and People; true Fear of *God*, sorrow for, and hatred of Sin; producing those Fruits mentioned, *Galat.* 5. 22, 23. as *Patience*, *Meekness*, *Humility*, and the like. Also the Spirit helps the Soul to act those Graces, and to perform those Duties required of us. in order to our Salvation: It guides and leads, and teacheth us, helps our Infirmities, teacheth us to pray, and carrieth on the whole work of Sanctification in us. And this I take to be the Seal of the Spirit; when those saving Impressions and Habits of Grace and Holiness are wrought in and upon the Soul, whereby the Soul is made in some measure like unto *Christ Jesus*, being by the Spirit united to him, planted and grafted in him, and by vertue of its union with him, made partakers of his Life and Grace, whereby it lives and grows, until it come to the State of Perfection in the other World.

This

This Spirit thus savingly working, is *God's Seal upon our Hearts*, the Seal of his *everlasting love to our Souls*, and of his *everlasting Covenant* which he hath entred into with us, which he will never deface or blot out; and it is also the *Earnest of our Inheritance*; that thereby we may confidently conclude to our great comfort, that, as sure as he hath given us his Spirit, thus savingly to work in us those gracious Works, this gracious Change, this true Repentance, and Faith and Love, and Holiness, and other Graces; even so sure he will give us the Inheritance in Heaven at last: as surely as he hath sanctified us, so surely he hath justified us, and will glorifie us: For this is the Seal, this is the Earnest. And upon this account saith the Apostle, *Having this Seal, this Earnest, this comfortable Assurance of a better state, and of a better life after this, we groan earnestly to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven*; That we may possess that glorious purchased Inheritance, of which we now have the earnest; we long to enjoy the full Harvest, of which we have received the First-fruits, and consequently, we that have received these First-fruits, this blessed Earnest; have no cause to be troubled or disquieted, when these our earthly Tabernacles begin to decay and perish: because we are wrought by *God's Spirit* for a better state; and, as was said, not only the *Spirit of God worketh this willingness to die*, by working those Graces in the Soul, as you see; but also accompanying Afflictions, and blessing them, to crucifie our Affections to earthly things, and help to Holiness in order to our eternal Happiness; and therefore also ought the more patiently to be endured.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Then it is the chiefeſt wiſdom in the World, for every one of us to labour to become real Saints, to get into a ſtate of ſaving Grace; and often to ſearch and try our ſelves, and never to give over ſearching and trying, until we come to ſome well-grounded Aſſurance, That we are indeed truly Regenerated, and that we have a real Intereſt in *Jeſus Chriſt*; for this Aſſurance may be attained, and we are commanded to give *all diligence to attain it*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. It is not bare wiſhes or deſires will ſerve the turn, but we muſt labour and ſtrive after it, and be much in ſelf-examination, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. How is it poſſible we can have any true comfort living or dying, if we have no Aſſurance of a better Life; and ſo long as we know not whether we ſhall go to Heaven or Hell when we die: We all have been too negligent in labouring after this Aſſurance; let us lament it, and let us all now begin to beſtir our ſelves, and in *God's* ſtrength lay out our utmoſt care and pains in the uſe of all means to get the clear evidences of our peace with *God*, and that we are in a pardoned and reconciled ſtate; for upon this Aſſurance, we ſhall have this Advantage above all others, that we ſhall not be troubled nor much diſquieted, when our outward man doth decay and periſh, our earthly comforts fail us, our bodily Members wither; becauſe all theſe decays and waſtings do but make way, and prepare us for the happineſs of our Souls. Whereas, on the contrary, it muſt needs be an uncomfortable thing, to look upon a decaying Body, and be altogether uncertain what will become of the Soul when it leaves this Body: It muſt needs make Death terrible. But when we know that our

our Souls at death shall *enter into our Master's joy*, we shall bid Death welcom.

The Eighth Inference.

From what hath been said, we may draw one Rule of Tryal to us all, whereby we may know whether we be true real *Christians* or no, or only nominal, and but formal Professors, *viz.* by the real good to our Souls that our Afflictions have done us; we all have had Afflictions of one kind or other; let us examine what spiritual good we have got by them: look over the former Particulars, and apply them.

It is a true sign of a Child of *God*, to be the better for *Prosperity* and *Adversity*, and commonly more the better for *Adversity* than for *Prosperity*.

But lest we should be mistaken, I grant, that Affliction may work some good in the hypocritical Professors, as on *Ahab* and *Nineveh*. But note these Differences.

First, On the *Godly*, Afflictions work good mostly on their *inward man*, on their Souls; although they work good also on their Conversations; the sweet fruits of Afflictions appear also in their Lives. But on others, if Afflictions do work any good at all, it is mostly on their *outward man*; they may by them be outwardly reclaimed and reformed but not inwardly renewed and sanctified. Now there is a vast difference between outward Reformation and inward Renovation.

2*dly*, The fruit of Affliction on the Godly is continually increasing and growing; it is renewing *day by day*; as in the Text. But the Fruit of Affliction upon others, is like a *morning dew*, &c.

early cloud, which the Sun-blaſt of Proſperity dries all up, and blows all off. Thoſe ſeeming Fruits of Humility, of Senſibleneſs, Patience, Inclinations to good Duties, Reſolutions againſt Sin, *&c.* which appear in ſome in time of their Affliction, are all blaſted and withered again, when their Afflictions are removed, *Hoſ.* 6. 4.

Thirdly, The Fruit of Affliction upon the Godly is more afterward than at preſent, *Heb.* 12. 11. but on others 'tis moſt at preſent, even while the Affliction is upon them; then they will ſeek *God early and earneſtly*: but when the Affliction is over, they grow remiſs and careleſs. And oh, that this were not the fault of too many of the Godly! It is the After-fruit of Righteouſneſs, the exemplary Holineſs of our Lives afterwards, that is the good Fruit of ſanctified Afflictions, which we muſt bring forth, to evidence the Love of our Father to us in his Chaſtnings of us, and our ſpiritual Profit by thoſe Chaſtiſements. It is not ſo much how we behave our ſelves in the time of our Afflictions, (though that muſt be minded alſo, and careful we muſt be to carry our ſelves as Chriſtians under the Croſs;) for an *Ahab* may then behave himſelf well: but the great matter is, how we carry our ſelves after our Afflictions; that then we bear and bring forth the quiet and peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs; that we ſhew forth in our Converſations, the ſingular good and ſpiritual profit that we have get by our Afflictions; that we are become more holy, more heavenly, more humble, meek, lowly, more tender-hearted, more watchful and circumſpect, more zealous of good works, more charitable, more careful in all things to pleaſe *God*. This is that will clearly prove,

That

That Afflictions have done us good. and then w
ſhall have cauſe to bleſs *God* for them.

Fourthly, The promiſed Good and Bleſſing o
Affliction, is the main thing which the gracio
Soul moſtly deſireth, prayeth for, and hopes a
expects: Thus he breaths; O, that this ſtro
may be a ſtroke of Love; O, that this Afflictio
may do good to my *inward man*; O, that my So
may flouriſh and proſper, and be a Gainer by
my outward Loſſes and Croſſes: O, that my So
may be purged in thoſe Fires, and cleanſed
thoſe Waters of Affliction, that I may bring ic
all the bleſſed Fruits of Affliction; and O, t
God would accompliſh all his gracious ends up
my Soul, by his Chaſtiſements: but it is not
with others; they cry, Lord, remove thy ha
take away my Affliction.

Fifthly, The gracious Soul underſtands *God's*
ſign in Affliction, and earneſtly deſires to k
the whole Mind of *God*, and why the Lord c
tendeth with him; and hears the Voice of
Rod, ſearcheth for his Sin, for the Plague of
own Heart; repents and turns to God through
caſts away the Idols of his heart, reſolves ag
his Corruptions; prays and hopes for the ble
of his Affliction; and thereupon he labours
ſubmit to the holy Will of God, and patiently
bear his Afflictions. But it is not ſo with ot
they are not ſollicitous about the attaining of
ſpiritual good to their Souls; ſo they can ge
the Affliction, they care for no more: Whe
the gracious Soul is afraid that he ſhall loſe
benefit of his Afflictions, and therefore is
earneſt with God for it.

Sixthly, The gracious Soul ſeeks a Reparation of all his Loſſes, and a Balance to all his Troubles in *God* through *Chriſt*, and in *God's Covenant*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. and there he finds it in ſome meaſure, which ſtayeth and quieteth him: When the ſtreams of all Creature-comforts fail him, he repairs to God the Fountain, and there he lies for all Supplies, *Pſalm* 31. 14. *Pſalm* 142. 4, 5. *Refuge failed me, no man cared for my Soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I ſaid, thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.* But the Ungodly are ſtrangers to this courſe in the time of their trouble.

Now theſe things conſidered, we may by them attain in ſome meaſure the knowledge of our eſtate, whether we be godly or no; in a ſtate of Grace or no; to wit, by the real good our Souls have gotten by our bodily troubles.

So much for Information.

II. The ſecond *Uſe* is of *Counſel* to *God's afflicted People*, when their earthly Comforts wither and decay.

1. Bear the *Indignation of the Lord*, take his blows with patience, acknowledge his hand, ſtoop and ſubmit to his Will; He is your gracious, wiſe, merciful Father that ſmites you; he intends you no hurt; He that loves you better than you can love your ſelves; He that Redeemed you, and he that knows what is beſt for you; He that intends all for your good, and will cauſe all things to work for your good: therefore in your *patience poſſeſs ye your Souls*, and quietly ſubmit to his good Will.

2. *Search*

2. *Search your Hearts and try your Ways, and turn to him that smiteth you*; Commune with your own Hearts; call to remembrance your neglects of Duty to God and Man; your neglect of the Soul of your Relations; your careless performance of holy Duties; your mis-spending your Talents; your earthly and unprofitable discourses, &c. This is a time for Heart-searching, a time for *the trying of your ways*, Lamentat. 3. 40. *In the day of Adversity consider*: Consider wherefore God afflicts you; consider what you have done against God, and what your present Duty is: Repent of your former miscarriages, humble your selves under God's mighty hand; and act Faith on the Lord Jesus for Remission, and by Faith labour to draw strength of Grace to reform and amend; and so comply with God's design in his Corrections, which is to take away your Sin, and to make you partakers of his Holiness.

3. In your Afflictions consult *God's Word*, and be conversant therewith, and conform thereto. Now learn *to keep God's Precepts*, Psalm 119. 67. Now set *straight steps to your feet*, Heb. 12. 12. In *God's Word* you will find sweet Counsels and Consolations, precious Promises, encouraging Examples of *Faith and Patience*; supporting, quickning and strengthning Arguments: Had it not been for *God's Word*, David *had perished in his affliction*. O, therefore now study the Scriptures and make them your Meditation Night and Day; acquaint your selves with *God's Word*, and apply it, and yield up your selves to the obedience of it: holy *Job* in his Affliction, esteemed the *Word of God above his necessary Food*; and *David*, *above Gold and Silver*.

4. Let

4. Learn and comply with God's Designs in chastening you: His main Designs are these; To take *away our Sins*, Isa. 27. 9. He takes away our *Sins*, to destroy our *Dalilahs*; he removes the desire of our Eyes, to consume the Defilements of our Hearts; God designs the purifying of us, to make us clean and holy, and fit Vessels for himself to dwell in, to make us partakers of his holiness, and conformable to his Son; to make our Souls better; to draw us off from all our *Idols*, and to draw us nearer to himself, and to prevent our sinning here, and our condemnation with the World hereafter. O blessed, gracious Ends our heavenly Father hath in all his Chastisements of us; now it's our Duty to comply with these his Ends, and pursue them with utmost diligence.

Quest. But how shall we pursue those Ends?

Answ. *First, by deep and serious Meditation upon those few special things fit to be thought on in Affliction.*

1. Think seriously on the meritorious Causes of your Affliction; search for your Sins; let your Spirits make diligent search for your Sins; for now God is searching for your Sins, *Zeph.* 1. 12. and we should set in with him, and think how greatly you have provoked him, how unkindly you have dealt with him; against what Light and Love, and Mercy you have sinned; and think also upon the desert of your Sins; you are now under outward Afflictions, but where had you been, if God had dealt with you according to your Deserts? Call to mind your Sins, and repent, and reform?

2. Think seriously on the Designs of God in all your Troubles, what good Intentions God hath

in

in them; that he aims at nothing but your real spiritual, and eternal good: If he break your earthly Comforts, waste your Estates and bodies, it is for the good of your Souls; be perswaded of this, consider it, and lay it to heart.

3. Think seriously of the Love of God in Christ to you, in all your Afflictions; they come from his Fatherly Love, he sees that you need them, that your Souls will perish without them; and that he doth chastise you, because he loves you, and because you are his Children.

4. Think also, how infinitely better God deals with you, than with others, whom he chastneth not here, but reserves them for the Wrath to come, unto everlasting Destruction; in comparison of which, all your heaviest Afflictions here are not as much as Flea-bitings.

5. Think also upon the many exceeding great and precious Promises which God hath made to you, for your support: As, *that he will be with you; will never leave you; that all shall work together for your good; that he will uphold you;* and many such.

6. Think seriously and deeply on that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, for which all your Afflictions do prepare you. Thus be much in Meditation on those things

Lastly, Think upon *the Sufferings of Christ* for you; *his bitter Agony, and bloody Sweat in the Garden; his cruel, cursed, shameful, painful Death on the Cross*, Isa. 53.10. Thus if we exercise our Thoughts in these Considerations, it will help us to the attaining the gracious Ends of God in his Chastisements.

Secondly

Secondly, As by *Meditation*, so by *Prayer* we must pursue God's Ends: Now pray, *pray continually*, *pray without ceasing*; pray most earnestly, most fervently; strive and wrestle with God in Prayer, as *Jacob did for the Blessing*; so should we pray, and continue *instant in prayer*, that God would accomplish all his blessed Designs upon our Souls, and perform his whole Work.

Thirdly, By *Faith in Christ*, and *in the Promises*; for no Blessing comes to the Soul any way, but *in* and *by Jesus Christ*; and only *in* and *through him are the Promises fulfilled*: Therefore in all our Afflictions, we must look unto *Jesus*, as unto him, through whose hands the Affliction comes upon us; for all our Afflictions come through his hand; and the blessing of them comes through his hand also; act *Faith* on all that *Jesus* hath done and suffered for you; and upon what he is doing for you in Heaven; and upon what gracious Promises he hath made to you: and the more you can act *Faith on Christ*, the more you will love him; and the more you love him, the more patiently and comfortably you will bear his Chastisements; as knowing that they proceed from his *Love to you*, Rev. 3. 19.

III. *The last Use is for Consolation*: The *Text* and *Doctrine* is very full of Comfort. If this be a Truth that I have held out; *That the perishings and wastings of the outward man, of the People of God, tend to the renewing of their inward man*; then let none of *God's People* be discouraged or dejected, whatever Afflictions befal them; Poverty, Sickness, Restraint, loss of Relations, Estates: Remember and consider, what great Spiritual Good all shall certainly produce to you, and what a gracious

cious issue all your Afflictions shall have upo you; and therefore faint not, nor be weary; bu be quiet and comforted.

Quest. *But when may we take Comfort in our A flictions?*

Answ. 1. When God's smiting you, works you *true turning unto God*, Isa. 9. 13. Jer. 31. 1 19, 20. for then *Affliction* proceeds from Go Love, and turns to your good. O, the yerni Bowels of God towards returning Sinners.

2. When by Chastisements we are made pa takers of God's holiness, made more holy, a more conformable to Christ than formerly, *He* 12. 10.

3. When God's Soveraignty works in us s lence and submission; as in *Eli*, *David*, a others.

4. When God's Rods on us make us mo obedient to his Law, *Psalm.* 94. 12, 13. a 119. 67. 71.

5. When God's Righteousness in what he doe gives quietness and satisfaction to the Soul; *Dan.* 9 14. *Nehem.* 9. 33.

6. When *Afflictions* put us upon Self-examin tion, and searchings for our Sins, *Lam.* 3. 4 *Gen.* 42. 21.

7. When in *Afflictions* we can see God's faith fulness, making good his Promises, *Psalm* 119. 7 He hath promised to *withhold no good thing*.

8. When we hope and believe, that God wi give us more, and better things, than those h takes from us, 2 *Chron.* 25. 9. *Psalm* 90. 14, 1 *Isa.* 35. 6.

9. When God's *Wisdom* contents us; that b cause God is only wise, and knows best, what is be

for us, this contents us, *Iſa.* 28. 27, 28. Infinite Wiſdom hath ordered it.

10. When we can firmly believe that God's Love is in all his Chaſtiſements, *Heb.* 12. 6. All theſe things will produce Comfort in all our Afflictions; eſpecially when we can ſee theſe Effects in ſome meaſure brought forth in us, we may conclude, that God's gracious Deſign proſpers in us.

Could we but find that our *inward man* grows better, and that we grow and flouriſh in Grace, when our *outward man* doth decay and periſh, we ſhould not faint.

The good Lord grant that this may be the good Effect of all my Afflictions.

Amen.

So much of the Firſt Part.

PART II.

Orthodox Paradox:

OR, THE

Greateſt Temporal Evil working the greateſt Eternal Good.

2 COR. iv. 17.

For our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.

THIS the *Apoſtle* brings in as a Reaſon of that holy Courage that he and the *Primitive Chriſtians* had under all their Troubles, *that they did not faint*, but rather, *they grew ſtrength*; and as their *outward man* periſhed, their Souls

Souls, their better part, flouriſhed and proſpered; as in the foregoing Verſe: *For* (ſaith he) *our light affliction*, &c.

In which Reaſon or Argument we may obſerve,

1. The Nature of the Saints Troubles; they are *Afflictions*.

2. The Qualities of them; they are *light*, and but for a *moment*.

3. The Tendency of them, or their ſubſerviency to their eternal good, through God's bleſſing on them; they *work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*.

1. For the Nature of the Saints Troubles, they are *Afflictions*, and our *Afflictions*: All the Saints Troubles in this Life are *Afflictions*, and but *Afflictions*; they are not properly Puniſhments, inflicted on them, to make Satisfaction for Sin. They are not *Deſtructions*, no, they are but *Afflictions*. The original word is Θλίψις, which ſignifieth a preſſing, from the effect of them on the Saints; for they are ſent to preſs out their hidden Corruptions, that were in the Heart undiſcovered; to make manifeſt that which lay hid before. *Affliction* is as God's Wine-preſs alſo, to preſs out the ſweet Wine of Grace, that it may appear in Act and Exerciſe. It is alſo God's Fullers-preſs, to preſs out the inward ſpots and defilements of their Souls. *Afflictions* are not to the Saints Executions of Vengeance, not Deſtructions, as they are to others, Deſtruction upon Deſtruction; that is, one Trouble and Diſtreſs upon another; ſo they are to the Wicked.

2. They are our *Affliction* too: this may note, firſt, the commonneſs of them to all men, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. No Temptation befals us, but what is common to Men, to all Men, and moſtly, to all Saints; it is their Lot, their Portion; yea, it is

God's Gift to them, *Phil.* 1. 29. Secondly, It may note the Propriety the Saints have in their *Afflictions*, and Benefit they have by them. Theſe *Afflictions* are ours, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *All things are yours, things preſent:* the preſent *Afflictions* are ours; that is, they are ſanctified, and made profitable to us; they are our Friends, Friends to our Souls, not our Foes; they are our Helps, not our Harms; they are ours in common alſo; they are the Churches Troubles; others ſympathize with us, and they count our Afflictions theirs.

And if this be ſo, what reaſon have we to faint and ſink under our Troubles, ſeeing they are but Afflictions, not Deſtructions, and ſeeing they are ours alſo, for our good and advantage, appointed and ordered to us by the loving Hand of our only-wiſe God and gracious Father: and ſeeing all the People of God have a ſhare in them, by way of ſympathy, and we have a ſhare in their Prayers for us, therefore we faint not.

2. The ſecond Branch of this Argument is the Quality of thoſe Afflictions, expreſſed here by two words, 1. *They are light,* ἐλαφρὸν, *leve*; the ſame word in *Mat.* 11. 30. *My burden is light*; that is, it is tolerable, ſufferable, ſuch as may be endured and ſuffered: Chriſt's Government is not intolerable, neither are the Afflictions of his People.

Object. But how can that be, that the Troubles of God's People are light? Were *David's* Troubles light, from whom we often hear ſuch ſad and bitter Complaints? And were *Job's* Troubles light, *Job* 6. 3, 4. And were the Primitive Chriſtians Troubles light? See the 7th and 8th Verſes of this Chapter; and elſewhere the Apoſtle com-

complains, that they were preſſed above meaſure, and deſpaired even of Life?

Anſw. The meaning plainly is comparative; *Afflictions* are light, not ſimply conſidered in themſelves, but by way of compariſon; as thus.

1. They are *light*, in compariſon of what our Sins have deſerved. Sin deſerves Eternal Death, everlaſting Flames in Hell, everlaſting Deſtruction, eaſeleſs, endleſs, remedileſs Torments. The Wages of Sin is Death, eternal Damnation, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8, 9. Now, in compariſon of Hell and Damnation, all our Afflictions are but light, but as Fleabitings to thoſe eternal Torments: Oh, what is the Wrath of Man to the Wrath of a GOD? What is the Diſpleaſure of a Father to the Revenge of an Enemy? Oh, what is Sickneſs, Poverty, a Priſon, Loſſes, *&c.* to Hell-fire?

2. They are light, in compariſon of the cruel, bitter, dreadful Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God. He, upon whom the Spirit of Might did reſt, was even ſunk by them; if we do but duly conſider Chriſt's Sufferings, his bloody, bitter Agony in the Garden, when his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful even to death, he was ſore amazed; when all the Sins of the Elect were laid on him, made to meet on him, *Iſa.* 53. 6. all the Wrath of Men and Devils on him, yea, and which was heavieſt of all, his Father's Wrath was on him; it pleaſed the Father to bruiſe him, and to put him to grief, *Iſa.* 53. 10. All this would have ſunk Ten thouſand Worlds; this made our deareſt Lord ſweat great drops of Blood, *&c.* Oh, the inconceivable love of our Bleſſed Jeſus! O, the curſed nature of Sin! But what are all our Afflictions, all our Sufferings, in compariſon of Chriſt's? He was

afflicted, he was *oppreſſed*, infinitely more than ever any man was, or can be.

3. *Light* too, in compariſon of what the Wicked ſhall ſuffer hereafter: ſee *Pſal.* 11. 6. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. *Revel.* 21. 8. Our *Afflictions* are light, ſurely very light in compariſon of theſe.

4. *Light* alſo in compariſon of the Glory that *God's Suffering Saints* ſhall afterwards enjoy. This our Apoſtle affirms, *Rom.* 8. 18. *I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* Not worthy to be compared with that far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. Thus are our *Afflictions* ſaid to be light.

2. Another Quality of our *Afflictions* noted here, is, That our *Afflictions* are ſhort alſo: as they are light, ſo they are ſhort too, *παραυτικα*, *momentany*, *for a moment*.

Object. But how can this be? Did not *David* complain, that he was *afflicted* from his Youth, and the Church in *Affliction* four hundred years at once? How then are their *Afflictions* ſhort?

Anſw. This *for a moment*, or ſhort time, muſt be underſtood comparatively alſo; Our *Afflictions* are ſhort, and *for a moment*, in compariſon of what the Damned muſt ſuffer; for their Death is eternal, their Deſtruction is everlaſting, everlaſting Damnation in Hell, the Fire never goeth out, the *Worm never dyeth*. But eſpecially, our *Afflictions* here are ſhort, as well as light in compariſon of that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, that the Saints ſhall poſſeſs hereafter.

Obſerve the *Antitheſis*, or oppoſition here in the Text, which duly conſidered, and Faith acted on it,

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is enough to ſupport a Chriſtian under all his Troubles. Mark it well.

For *Afflictions* here, he ſhall have *Glory* hereafter; for *light Afflictions* he ſhall have a *weight of Glory*; for *ſhort Afflictions* an *eternal weight of Glory*; yea, *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*: in compariſon of which *Afflictions*, all our *Afflictions* may well be termed light and ſhort.

Let us ſeriouſly conſider how ſtrangely and wonderfully the Happineſs of Suffering Saints is here ſet out by the Apoſtle.

1. It is *Glory*, it is *Glory* that they ſhall receive hereafter, a *Crown of Glory*, that fadeth not away. It is *Glory* that they ſeek for, *Rom.* 2. 6, 7. and it is *Glory* they ſhall have. Here in this World the poor Chriſtian meets with ſhame and diſhonour, laden with Reproaches, made the off-ſcouring of all things, trodden down as Mire in the Streets, the Song of Drunkards; but hereafter they ſhall be advanced to *Glory*: what this *Glory* imports, I ſhall enquire hereafter. It is ſurely a Soul-ſupporting, a Soul-ſatisfying thing.

2. It is a *weight of Glory*: Not a grain or ſcruple, (though a little of this *Glory* will abundantly recompenſe all our Sufferings in the way to it) but it is a *weight of Glory*, enough to fill all the Faculties of the whole Soul, enough to ſatisfie the vaſt Deſires of the Mind, which the whole Creation cannot do; yea, enough to ſink the Soul under the weight of it, did not the Almighty Power of God uphold it.

3. It is *eternal* alſo: The glorified Saints ſhall never be unglorified again: it is everlaſting Glory.

4. It is *an exceeding weight of Glory*: ſurmounting, ſurpaſſing, and tranſcending, not only our Merits, but our Deſires, our Thoughts and Imaginations,

ginations, *Epheſ.* 3. 20. and of which it may be ſaid, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Myſteries of the Goſpel, that *it never entred into the heart of man to conceive*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9.

5. It is a *more exceeding*: it is a marvellous Glory; what a Climax, what a Gradation is here!

6. A *far more exceeding*: it exceeds all our Deſires, all our Thoughts, it is more than we can ask or think; it exceeds all our Doings, all our Sufferings, more than Heaven exceeds Earth, or Light Darkneſs, or any thing we can imagine: καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολήν. This *Glory* is excellent, ſuper-excellent, beyond all meaſure excellent. Now, in compariſon of this excellent Glory, all our preſent Sufferings are but light and ſhort; and if ſo, is there any reaſon the Saints ſhould faint under them, but rather to bear up, and be of good courage?

3. The third Branch of this Argument is, the Influence that theſe ſhort and light *Afflictions* have upon this *Glory*, or the Reference they have unto it, or Tendency towards it; and that is very conſiderable, and it is this: Thoſe *Afflictions* work for us this tranſcendent *Glory*. It is no where ſaid, that Honours, or Pleaſures, or Riches work for us this Glory, but *Afflictions* work it; that is, the only-wiſe God, who can bring Light out of Darkneſs, Sweet out of Bitter, Good out of Evil; even He ſo ordereth and bleſſeth all the *Afflictions* of his People to them, that they become ſingularly uſeful, and influential, to work out for them this *Glory*: but not as the Papiſts hold, who abuſe this as they do other Scriptures, concluding hence, that the Saints Sufferings, as well as their Doings, do merit *Glory*; for this was not St. *Paul*'s meaning, becauſe he ſpeaks to the contrary, *Rom.* 8. 18, *I reckon*

reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed. *Glory* is Chriſt's Purchace, not Man's Merit.

But *Afflictions* work for us this Glory, by way of Preparation for it, as a way and means (though not the only and principal) which our gracious God appoints, ordereth, and ſanctifieth, to fit and prepare his People, for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. It was by the way of Suffering that our Lord, the Lord of Glory, went to his Glory, *Luk.* 24. 26. *Heb.* 2. 10. And therefore, ſeeing *Afflictions* have ſuch a reference, ſubſerviency, and tendency to Glory, that they are made uſeful to fit and prepare us for this moſt bleſſed, moſt excellent ſtate of Happineſs and Glory, we faint not under them, but rather we are encouraged and ſtrengthned by the conſideration of their tendency to prepare us for our eternal Happineſs.

Now let us put all theſe pieces together, and they will yield us this comfortable Doctrinal Concluſion, *viz.*

Doct. *That the light and ſhort Afflictions of the People of God here in this World, are ſingularly uſeful to work them for, and to work for them, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory in the World to come.*

This is ſo plainly aſſerted here by the Apoſtle, I need not ſtand to prove it; all I have to do, is to demonſtrate, and ſhew, how thoſe light and ſhort *Afflictions* of God's People, are thus ſingularly uſeful and influential to work them for, and to work for them, this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; which, by the aſſiſtance of God, I ſhall endeavour to do.

But before I begin this, it may not be amiſs to ſay a little (and I can ſay but a little, a very little, for I know very little) of this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*: And ſhall I ſpeak before I know? Lord, open my Underſtanding, and pardon any Ignorance.

By this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, I underſtand, all that wonderful Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs, which the great and glorious God hath prepared for, and promiſed unto his Children, and which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by his precious Blood and Paſſion, hath purchaſed for them, which chiefly conſiſts in their advancement and admiſſion into the neareſt enjoyment of the great and glorious God, the Chiefeſt Good, to be ever with the Lord, to ſee his Face, to know him as we are known of him, to live for ever with him, partaking of his Glory to their everlaſting Conſolation. But, alas! how ſhort and ſhallow are my Apprehenſions of what I am writing? 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. If it did not appear to the beloved Diſciple, what Happineſs the Saints ſhould be advanced to, at the laſt, but only in general, that when Chriſt appears, we ſhall be like him: No marvel if ſuch a poor blind Worm as I know ſo little; yet ſome glimpſes we have in the Glaſs of the Goſpel, whereby we may come to a little dark Knowledge, and a ſlight taſte of this Glory.

It is the Souls enjoyment of God, the chief Good, and that is the ſum and ſubſtance of all Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs; this is called, *Seeing God*, *Matth.* 5. 8. *Pſal.* 17. 15. *Revel.* 22. 4. *Beholding the glory of Chriſt*, *John* 17. 24. *Seeing God face to face*; that is, as far as Creatures are capable. See the Prayer of Chriſt, which doth notably expreſs this *weight of Glory*, *Joh.* 17. 21, 22, 23.

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That they all may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us; and the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that thou haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me. What can be more deſired? Here is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory indeed; a real Union of the Saints with the Bleſſed God, and the Bleſſed Jeſus, ſuch a Union as is between the Head and the Members, and between Huſband and Wife; yea, ſuch as is between God and Chriſt, and a participation of the ſame Glory that Chriſt himſelf doth poſſeſs, and an enjoyment of the ſame Love that Chriſt himſelf doth enjoy; yea, the Saints ſhall then be made like unto Chriſt, both in Soul and Body. "Lord, help me "to believe all this, and to be fully perſwaded "of it, that my Heart may be kindly affected, and "filled with enflamed affections towards my Bleſſed "Jeſus, who hath purchaſed all this Glory for us "with his moſt precious Blood: Oh, let me at-"tain the full aſſurance of my true Title thereto, "that I may praiſe thee, and may long for the "full poſſeſſion of it: O my baſe unbelieving "Heart! Lord, ſubdue my unbelief: Oh, what "pains ſhould we take to be aſſured of this Glory? "and, how patiently and cheerfully ſhould we bear "our Afflictions, that are deſigned to prepare us "for it?

But I cannot break off here. This *weight of Glory* is, by the Holy Ghoſt, in the Scripture repreſented to us, by all the moſt excellent and delightful things among Men, ſpeaking to our Capacities, and after the manner of Men. Hence it is called a *Kingdom*; *It is your Father's good pleaſure* (ſaith our Lord) *to give you a Kingdom*. I appoint

unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven, a Kingdom that cannot be moved; a Kingdom of Glory; a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away; a Crown of Righteouſneſs; a Crown of Life: Chriſt hath made us Kings and Prieſts to God. Here in this World the Saints have the Croſs, Fire, Faggot, Halters, Gibbets, *&c.* let them wait but a while, and they ſhall hear the Judge of the whole World ſay unto them, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* Now you are abuſed, reproached, impriſoned, impoveriſhed, deſpiſed; ſhortly you ſhall all be crowned.

This Glory is called the *Inheritance of the Saints in light*, an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for you: You that now may have no Houſe nor Home of your own, no certain Dwelling-place; and you that now dwell in Houſes of Clay, tottering every moment, being the Children of God, you ſhall ſhortly enter into everlaſting Habitations, and poſſeſs thoſe glorious Manſions in the Father's Houſe; you ſhall ſhortly inhabit that *Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens:* God hath prepared for you a City that hath Foundations of his own building and making: Hold out *Faith* and *Patience*, you ſhall ſhortly be tranſlated into the Paradiſe of GOD, above the reach of Men and Devils.

Moreover, (for methinks it is good to be here) when Chriſt, who is our Life, ſhall appear, we ſhall alſo appear with him in Glory; with Palms in our Hands, and Crowns on our Heads, and with everlaſting Joy and Songs of Praiſes in our Hearts and Mouths. This Glory is called Life, Everlaſting Life, Eternal Salvation, Everlaſting Peace,

Peace, and Everlaſting Reſt, the purchaſed Poſſeſſion, that which coſt the moſt precious Blood of the only Son of God to procure, ſurely it muſt be *a far more exceeding weight of Glory*, that coſt ſuch a price; this Glory is the Fruit of Chriſt's Blood, and of all his cruel Sufferings: Oh, that ſome Beams of it might be darted in upon my dark Heart by the Spirit, while I am writing this, to quicken and enlarge it.

It is Everlaſting Reſt, —— Reſt from all Sin, the greateſt burden to a gracious Soul; and from all Sufferings; from all doubts of God's love; from all ſenſe of God's Diſpleaſure; from all Temptations of Satan, of the World and Fleſh; Reſt from all Perſecutions: Now they that have ſuffered with Chriſt, ſhall be glorified with him; no Priſons, Baniſhments, Burnings, Hangings, Quarterings, then; Reſt from all our ſad and ſinful Diviſions, and from all our perſonal Sufferings, Pains, Diſeaſes, Loſſes of dear Relations, ill Tydings; Reſt from all Vain Thoughts, from all the pain of Duty, from all our Labours.

Let us a little further conſider, I. The Preparatives to this Glory; and, II. The Properties of it, that ſo our Hearts may be the more affected with it, and the more carried out with all Love and Deſires after him that purchaſed it for us, and with all labour and diligence to ſecure our title to it; and may alſo the better bear all our Afflictions, which prepare us for it, and lead us to it.

I. Of the Preparations to this Glory; and theſe are,

1. The *glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, Tit. 2. 13. Our bleſſed Lord will moſt certainly come again from Heaven,

ven, with Power and great Glory, attended by his mighty Angels, to receive his People to himself, that *where* he *is*, *there* they *may be also*, Joh. 14. 3. to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all those that believe, 2 *Thess.* 1. 10. Alas, what Comfort should we have in this life, if it were not for the Hope of Christ's second coming? He will not leave us here still, sinning, suffering, groaning, dying; no, no, the day of our full Redemption will come; our Lord will come again, and set all his poor Captives free; but a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry; He will come for our Salvation, *Heb.* 9. 28.

And for our great Comfort, let us know and believe, that however we now live as Lambs amongst Wolves, when our glorious Lord Jesus, the Lord of Glory, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, *the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. It should be then the Character of a Christian, as it is his Duty to love, to long, and look and wait for the Son of God from Heaven, even Jesus, whom he *raised from the dead*, which by bearing the most dreadful Wrath of his Father, hath delivered us from the Wrath to come, 1 *Thess.* 1. 10. *Act.* 1. 12. And while we are on Earth, we should *have our conversations in Heaven, and from thence look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body*, *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. being assured, that then we shall receive that *Crown of Righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give at that day, to all those that love his appearing*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. Oh then, seeing we look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all manner of holy Conversation and Godliness, giving all diligence, that we

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may be found of him in Peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs? O, what unſpeakable Comfort will the Coming of Chriſt bring to all his poor ſuffering Saints, the fore-thoughts of which ſhould ſupport us under all our preſent Troubles? Although, it may be, now we are deſtitute of all Creature-comforts, our Fleſh and Fleſhly Relations fail us, our Outward-man periſheth daily, our Bodily ſtrength decays, our Friends fail us, our own Hearts fail us, this ſhould comfort us, that our Lord is gone to Heaven, to prepare a place for us, and he is now preparing us for that place, by his Spirit, by his Word and Rod; and when he hath prepared us, he will come again, and take us to himſelf, that *where* he *is*, we *may be alſo*; And where is that, but at his Father's right hand, in Glory? *Col.* 3. 3, 4.

2. The ſecond Preparative to this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, is, that great and glorious Work of Chriſt, in raiſing our Bodies from the Duſt, and uniting them again to our Souls; the wonderful Effect of Almighty Power and Love. Read 1 *Cor.* 15. 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 15. Death *ſhall* not diſſolve the Union between Chriſt and us; not turn away his Affections from us; but in the morning of Eternity he *will ſend* his Angels, yea, *come himſelf*, and roll away the Stone, and unſeal our Graves, and awake us out of our long ſleep, and call us forth, to receive our own Souls again; and, oh what a joyful Meeting will that be? and, what unſpeakable comfort will that produce?

The Devil had the power of Death till he was overcome by Death, *Heb.* 2. 14, 15. but he that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, hath now the Keys of Death and Hell, *Rev.* 1. 18. The Saints Reſurrection to Glory is only the fruit

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of Chriſt's Death, and this fruit they ſhall certainly partake of. The Promiſe is ſure, *Joh.* 5. 28. *All that are in the graves ſhall hear* his *voice and come forth.* *Joh.* 6. 39. *And this is the Father's will which hath ſent* Chriſt, *that of all which* he *hath given* him, he *ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up at the laſt day.* So Ver. 40. *Joh.* 14. 19. As ſure as Chriſt is riſen, we ſhall riſe alſo; becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo: Beſides this mortal life we now live, we have a life that's hid with Chriſt in *God, And when Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in glory, Col.* 3. 3, 4. Oh then, beloved Fellow-chriſtians, *Let us be ſtedfaſt, unmovable, alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as we know our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* Let us never look at the Grave, but let us look to the Reſurrection beyond it. Let us contentedly commit theſe Carcaſſes to the Duſt, that dark Priſon ſhall not long contain them: Let us lye down in Peace, and take our Reſt, it will not be an everlaſting Night, nor endleſs Sleep; no, no, there will come a moſt joyful and glorious Morning. What if we go out of the Stirs and Troubles of this World, and enter into thoſe Chambers of Duſt, and the Doors be ſhut upon us, and we hide our ſelves, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt; as ſure as we awake in the morning, after we have ſlept ont the night, ſo ſure ſhall we then awake. And what if in the Grave we become loathſome Duſt, caſt out of the ſight of Men, as not fit to be endured among the Living? What if our Bones be digged up, and ſcattered about the Pits brink, and Worms conſume our Fleſh, yet *we know our Redeemer liveth*, and we ſhall ſee him with theſe Eyes: And why ſhould we be loth to lay down theſe Bodies of Fleſh, how comely or fair ſoever they

they are, they have been but the Priſons of our Souls, Clogs and Hinderances to our Souls in the Work of *God*, and Way to *Heaven*. What care, labour, grief and ſorrow have they coſt us? How many a weary, painful, tedious Day and Night? Grudge not, O my Soul, that *God* ſhould diſburthen thee of all this, and free thee from thy Fetters, and break open thy Priſon door; remember that when this Earthly Houſe of thy Tabernacle is diſſolved, thou haſt a Building of *God, an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

O my Soul! labour now to have thy part in the firſt Reſurrection; now labour to get into Chriſt, and to live in him by Faith and Love; now labour to know, O my Soul! the Power of his Death and Reſurrection, in thy dying to Sin, and living to Righteouſneſs; now act thy Faith on Jeſus, and thy Love to him, and let Jeſus live in thee, and manifeſt his Life in thy mortal Fleſh, and let thy Thoughts and Affections be ſet on things above; let thy Converſation be in Heaven, and let thy Heart be where thy Treaſure is; now live to him that dyed for thee, and roſe again, and then fear not Death, but be confident, that as ſure as Jeſus dyed, and roſe again, ſo ſure ſhall all they that ſleep in Jeſus riſe alſo; and that, altho' thy Body be ſown in Diſhonour, it ſhall be raiſed in Glory, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. This is the Second Preparative.

3. The Third Preparative to this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, is that great Aſſize, and general Judgment, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall ſit upon the Throne of his *Glory*, with all the innumerable Hoſt of glorious Angels about him, and all the Sons and Daughters of Men that ever lived upon Earth ſhall ſtand before him, *Rom.* 2. 16. & 14. 10. to be judged by him, and to receive

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their final Doom, *Rev.* 20. 12, 13. *Matth.* 25. 31. at which time there will be made an exact separation between the Sheep and the Goats, between the precious and the vile, and then the Saints shall be first acquitted and justified, and then with Christ shall judge the World. Those that have truly repented, and sincerely believed in the Lord Jesus, they that have chosen the Lord for their God and Chief Good, and Portion, placing all their Happiness in him, and have unfeignedly accepted of the Lord Jesus for their only Lord and Saviour, and have unfeignedly given themselves wholly up to his Government by his Word and Spirit, and entred cordially into Covenant with him, and became entirely his, these shall sit on his Right hand; these have often judged themselves in Heart-breaking Confessions, and therefore shall not be then judged to Condemnation by the Lord, for *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* *Rom.* 8. 1. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of *God*'s Elect? Shall the Law? These are not under the Law, but under Grace, their Surety hath fulfilled and satisfied the Law for them; the Law of the Spirit of Life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the Law of Sin and Death; it is God that justifieth, who shall condemn? The Judge himself hath said, That *he that believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life; shall not come into condemnation,* *Joh.* 3. 16, 17, 36. but will say to all such, *You have confessed me before men, and I will confess you before my Father and his holy Angels.* This will be the joyful day indeed, the day of our full Redemption, the time of refreshing indeed, the fore-thoughts of this day should support us under all our present Troubles.

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4. The Fourth Preparative is; the Saints ſolemn Coronation, and receiving into the Kingdom of their Father: Now the Crown of Righteouſneſs, of Life, of Glory, which was promiſed them from the beginning of the World, and purchaſed for them, by the moſt precious Blood of Jeſus, and laid up in Heaven for them, ſhall by the Lord, the righteous Judge, be given them at that day; they have been faithful unto Death, and therefore ſhall receive the Crown of Life. The Lord Jeſus will then ſay to all his Saints, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Every word is full of joy and comfort. [COME] will Chriſt ſay, *Approach this exceeding Glory; come as near as you will, for the way to it is open for you; I have made your paſſage plain by my blood.* Chriſt will not ſay then, *Come, take up your Croſs, and follow me*; but, *Come now, and receive your Crown.* [COME, YE BLESSED.] *In the world ye were accurſed, but now ye are bleſſed, and ſhall be bleſſed for ever.* [OF MY FATHER.] *You are the objects of my Father's love, he loveth you as he loveth me.* [INHERIT.] *You are the heirs of the promiſes, the heirs of the kingdom, the heirs of ſalvation.* No leſs than the Kingdom of Heaven. *You ſhall reign with me for ever and ever.* [PREPARED] Eternal Love hath laid the Foundation: He prepares the Kingdom for us, and then prepares us for the Kingdom. [FOR YOU] for you all poor penitent Believers, called Regenerate Souls; *for all you that received me by Faith, and perſevered therein to your death.*

Thus much for the Preparatives to this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

II. *Se-*

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall ſpeak a little alſo of the Properties of this *Glory*; but, oh how ſhort and ſhallow are my Apprehenſions of this alſo! Lord, enlighten my Underſtanding, and affect, enlarge, and quicken my Heart.

1. This glorious ſtate of Happineſs is called *The Purchaſed Poſſeſſion*, *Eph.* 1. 14. It is the Fruit of the Love and Blood of our dear Redeemer, whom we ſhall in Heaven behold and enjoy. We ſhall have our Redeemer alwaies before our Eyes, and the livelieſt ſenſe and freſheſt Remembrance of that bleeding-dying-love, ſtill upon our Souls. Oh, how will it fill our Souls with perpetual Raviſhments, to think that in the Streams of this Blood we have ſwam through the violence of the World, the ſnares of the Devil, the ſeducements of the Fleſh, the curſe of the Law, the wrath of an offended *God*, the Accuſations of a guilty Conſcience, and the vexing doubts and fears of an unbelieving Heart, and are paſſed through all, and are ſafely arrived at the Boſom of *God*.

O think, and think again, what weight of Wo and Wrath, of Sin and Sorrow, lay upon the Soul and Body of our moſt dear Lord, to purchaſe for us this *exceeding weight of glory*. His Soul was ſo preſſed, exceedingly oppreſſed, his Body broken, his Blood ſhed, to purchaſe this *Glory*. We value things by the Price they coſt: If any thing we enjoy were purchaſed by the Life of our dear Friend, how would we eſteem it? Certainly the bitter Death and Blood of our Lord will everlaſtingly ſweeten our Heavenly Glory: (Oh, the Joy!) we ſhall then leave thoſe Hearts of Stone and Rock behind us; the Sin that here ſo cloſely ſets us, and the ſottiſh Unkindneſs that follows

us ſo long, ſhall not be able to follow us into that *Glory*; but we ſhall behold, as it were, the wounds of Love, with Eyes and Hearts of Love for ever. Now his Heart is open to us, and ours ſhut to him; but when his Heart is open, and our hearts open too, oh what a weight of Joy will there then be! What a paſſionate meeting was there between our new-riſen Lord and the firſt-ſinful ſilly Woman that he appears unto? How did Love ſtruggle for expreſſion? *Mary!* ſaith Chriſt: *Maſter!* ſaith *Mary*; and preſently ſhe claſps about his Feet, having her Heart as near his Heart, as her Hands were to his Feet. What a meeting of Love then will there be, between the new-glorified Saint, and the glorious Redeemer? But I am here at a loſs, my Apprehenſions fail me, and *fall ſhort*; only this I believe, that it *will* be the ſingular Praiſe of our *Glory*, that it was bought with the price of that Blood; and the ſingular Joy of the Saints to behold the Purchaſer and the Price, together with the Poſſeſſion.

2. *Secondly*, This *Glory* alſo is moſt free; it was dear to Chriſt, but free to us: *Silver* and *Gold* could not purchaſe this *Glory*, nothing but the precious Blood of the Son of God; but we have it freely, for nothing, without Mony, and without Price. It's true, this *Glory* is promiſed on Conditions, but the Condition is but hearty Acceptance, and to take him for our Lord, who hath redeemed us, eſpecially when the Condition is alſo given, as it is by *God* to *all his Choſen*. Faith, which is the main Condition, is the gift of *God*. O the everlaſting admiration which muſt needs ſurprize the Saints, to think of the freeneſs of their Glory! O what did the Lord ſee in me, to count me meet for ſuch a ſtate? That I, a poor, diſeaſed, deſpiſed Wretch, ſhould be cloathed in the brightneſs of

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this *Glory!* That I, a ſilly worthleſs Worm, ſhould be advanced to this high Dignity! That I, who was but lately groaning, weeping, dying, ſhould now be ſo full of Joy as my Heart can hold! Yea, ſhould be taken from the Grave, where I was rotting and ſtinking; and from the Duſt and Darkneſs, where I ſeemed forgotten, and here ſet before the Throne of *God* in Glory! when the poor ſelf-denying, ſelf-accuſing, humble Soul, that thought himſelf unworthy the ground he trod on, unworthy the air he breathed in, unworthy to eat, drink, or live; that this Soul ſhall find himſelf wrapt up into Heaven, cloſed in the Arms of Chriſt, crowned with *Glory*, in a moment! Do but think with your ſelves what a tranſporting aſtoniſhing thing this will be: ſurely our Unworthineſs ſhall not hinder our Glory. *God* hath choſen the Poor of this World, rich in Faith, to be Heirs of that Kingdom.

Grace is moſt free, ſo is *Glory:* As we pay nothing for our Pardon, ſo nothing for our Glory. What an aſtoniſhing thought will it be, to think of the unmeaſurable difference between our Deſervings and our Receivings, between the ſtate we ſhould have been in, and the ſtate we are in! to look down upon Hell, and ſee the vaſt difference between us and them? to ſee the Inheritance, which we were born to, ſo different from that we are adopted to! O, what pangs of Love will it cauſe within us, to think, yonder in that dreadful place, in thoſe Lakes of Fire and Brimſtone, was my native place, my deſerved Portion, thoſe unquenchable Flames ſhould have lain on me, that never-dying Worm ſhould have fed on me! But that unſearchable rich Grace, and infinite Love in *God*, through the moſt precious Blood of my Redeemer, I am delivered from that place of

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Torment. Eternal Life is the *Gift of God*, through Jesus Christ my Lord: Did not I neglect Grace, and make light of the Offers of Life, and slight my Redeemer's Blood a long time, as well as those poor damned Souls? Did not I waste my time, forget my *God* and my *Soul*, and walk after the flesh, as well as they? Was not I born in Sin and Wrath, as well as they? Or, who made me to differ? Should I ever have loved *God*, if he had not first loved me? Or ever been willing, if he had not made me willing? Had not I been in those times, if I had my own way, and if he had let me alone to my own will? Oh, how free was all this infinite Love, and how free is this Crown of Glory, that so glorious a Crown should be set on the head of so vile a Creature?

3. The third Property of this *Glory* is, that it shall be *fully satisfying* and *contenting*, for it is a *weight of Glory*, an *exceeding weight of Glory*: It shall be a perfect freedom from *all Evil*, and a perfect fruition of *all Good*: This Glory shall be perfectly suited to our Natures; for, as here in this Life every gracious Soul is made partaker of the Divine Nature, of the Life of God in some measure, and made like Christ in some degree; so in the Life to come he shall have a Nature more *fully like God*, his holy Image more *fully* printed on him, and made more *fully* like Christ: *When he shall appear, we shall see him as he is, and we shall be like him*, 1 Joh. 3. 2. When we awake, at the glorious morning of the Resurrection, we shall be satisfied with his likeness, *Psal.* 17. 15. This Glory shall be perfectly suited also to the Desires of the Saints; then the Soul shall have *all* that Heart can wish, *all* that ever thou (O poor believing Soul) didst ever pray or labor for, there thou shalt find: thou wouldst rather have *God* in *Christ*, than all the World; why,

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there thou ſhalt have him. O, what wouldſt thou give for the Aſſurance of his Love? Why, there thou ſhalt have Aſſurance beyond all ſuſpicion; yea, thou ſhalt have infinitely more than thou can deſire.

This *Glory* is ſuited alſo to *all* the Neceſſities of the Saints; it will make a full ſupply to *all* our wants, for it is an *exceeding weight of Glory*. *My God ſhall ſupply all your need with the riches of his glory in Jeſus Chriſt*, *Phil.* 4. 19. Here in this World we are always complaining of Wants; for Soul or Body, or both, we want *Grace*, want Peace and Comfort; we want Health and Friends; nothing but Wants: But when once we come to poſſeſs this *exceeding weight of Glory*, we ſhall have no more cauſe to complain of Wants; we ſhall never want any thing for ever, for we ſhall be filled with *all the Fulneſs of God*; we ſhall ever be with the Lord, and dwell in his preſence for ever, in whoſe preſence is *fulneſs of Joy*, and *at whoſe right hand are Pleaſures for evermore*. *Solomon* ſaid, That *Money anſwereth all things*; I am ſure that *Glory* will anſwer all things.

4. *Fourthly*, This Glory is *incorruptible*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. This is an Inheritance *incorruptible and undefiled*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. We ſhall then have Joy without any mixture of Sorrow, Reſt without Wearineſs. As there is no mixture of Corruption with our Graces then, ſo no mixture of Sufferings with our Solace. Our beſt Comforts here are mixed with Croſſes; we have no Flower without Prickles. Our beſt Wine is mixed with Water, and ſometimes with Vinegar and Gall. We are now ſometimes even at the gates of Heaven, and preſently almoſt as low as Hell. To day we are well, to morrow ſick; to day in credit, to morrow in diſgrace; to day have Friends, to morrow none.

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The only thing that corrupts and imbitters our ſweeteſt Comforts here, is our Sins, and God's hiding his Face from us, for our Sins. It is Sin that puts Gall and Wormwood into all our pleaſant Cups; but when we ſhall receive that *exceeding weight of Glory*; we ſhall ſin no more for ever. Hark, O my Soul, the beſt News that ever thou heardſt, ſince that greateſt good news of a Saviour; the time is coming, when thou ſhalt ſin no more, *Rev.* 21. 27. then Saints are Saints indeed, *Eph.* 5. 27. O poor Believer, if it were put to thy choice, wouldſt thou not rather chuſe to be freed from Sin, than to be made Heir of all the World? Wait till then, and thou ſhalt have thy deſire. That hard, earthly, carnal Heart, that thou haſt ſo often complain'd of to the Lord; thoſe vain and vile Thoughts, which did lye down and riſe with thee, ſhall trouble thee no more: Oh, bleſſed ſtate, bleſſed time!

5. And *Laſtly*, It is *an eternal weight of glory*; a Crown of Glory *that fadeth not away*; that Life is everlaſting; there is no more Death, it is everlaſting Peace, everlaſting Joy, Pleaſures for evermore, Eternal Glory: O bleſſed Eternity! The Saints ſhall be Pillars in the Temple of God, and go no more out for ever: What! to be eternally bleſſed, to be ever with the Lord? What can my ſhallow Thoughts conceive of this? O happy Souls in Hell, if they could eſcape after millions of years! But how infinitely happy are thoſe in Heaven, that ſhall live there eternally! O this amazing, this aſtoniſhing word Eternity!

O my Soul, ſtudy this word [*Everlaſting*;] methinks it ſhould revive thee in thy deepeſt Agony: Thy Heavineſs ſhall endure but for a night; God will hide his Face but for a moment; thy

Afflictions are but light and short, thy Temptation shall be but an hour, thy Tribulation but ten days, but *thou shalt receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Believe this, O my Soul, and let thy Heart break and melt, that thou art no more affected with that eternal Love that purchased this eternal Glory for thee: For ever adore and admire eternal Love and Grace, and double thy Diligence, to secure thy title to this *eternal weight of glory*; and live in the Love, and in the high Praises of thy dear Redeemer; and patiently bear all thy Afflictions, because they are preparing thee for this Glory.

Thus we have seen a little of the Preparatives to, and Properties of this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; and, alas! how little do I know of it! Now, before I proceed, let us also enquire who shall be the Possessors of this Glory, or what those happy persons are, that shall be made partakers of this Blessedness, that we may know whether we our selves have any title to it, and have any good hope, through Grace, that we shall one day enjoy it: It will be but small Comfort to hear of all this Blessedness and Happiness, if we our selves have no right to it. And of this briefly.

Certainly this most blessed state is not for all, not for most, but only for a few: *Few*, saith our Lord, *shall be saved*; and those are the Children of God, only they are Heirs to this Glory, *Rom.* 8. 17. If Children, then Heirs, not else; and such we are not by Nature, *Joh.* 8. 44. *Eph.* 2. 2, 3, 12. But all that are the Children of *God*, are made so by Grace; they are made so by Faith in Christ. *Gal.* 3. 26. *We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*: And if we are Christ's by Faith, then are we

we the Heirs of the Promiſe, *Gal.* 3. 29. That is, we are Heirs of this promiſed Glory. So *Heb.* 6. 17, 18. Alſo we are made the Children of *God* by Regeneration, by the New-birth. Full is that Text, *John* 1. 12, 13. *As many as received him*, that is Chriſt, *to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to as many as believe in his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* So 1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4. we are ſaid to be begotten to this Inheritance. *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.* So 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. And our Lord, who is Truth it ſelf, hath aſſured us, that *except a man be born again, he can never ſee the kingdom of God*; that is, he ſhall never inherit this *Glory*. It is prepared for none but *God*'s Children, and none are his Children but true Believers in Chriſt; none but ſuch as are truly regenerate, and born again by the Word and Spirit; now all ſuch as are in Chriſt have his Spirit living and ruling in them: *Rom.* 8. 9. *If any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, the ſame is none of his.* And, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature; all old things are paſt away, and all things are become new.* And ſuch as are born again, they have the Image of *God* repaired in them, the Divine Nature communicated to them, the Life of *God* planted in them, and are thereby enabled to live unto *God*, and to walk as his Children, in ſincere Obedience to all his Commandments, in reſemblance of their Heavenly Father, in moſt hearty and ſuperlative love to him, and in an holy confidence in him, and entire dependance on him, as their moſt gracious Father Almighty, in and through their moſt dear Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Theſe are the perſons, and

these only, that shall be advanced to this *exceeding weight of glory*.

Moreover, we are made the Children of God by Covenant; God, the All-sufficient Good, of his infinite Love and Grace, condescends to poor Sinners, and freely bestows himself upon them, becomes their God in Christ, and takes them into Covenant with himself, and makes them his Sons and Daughters, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17, 18. communicating to them his Spirit, working in them all sanctifying Graces, pardoning their Iniquities, giving them new Hearts, new Spirits, soft and tender Hearts, Hearts to tremble at his Word, to mourn for Sin, their own and others, tender of God's Honour, Hearts to love him, Hearts to fear him, &c. and enabling them to give up their whole selves unfeignedly and unreservedly unto the Lord Jesus Christ, taking him for their only Lord and Saviour, and as the only way and means to bring them unto God, and to his glory, submitting themselves to his gracious government in all things, and trusting in him for Life and Salvation. These are the Children of God, which shall certainly inherit this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.

They are the People of God, that shall possess this glory, who are described by a famous Divine thus: ——— 'They are a part of the Externally called, who being by the Spirit of Christ 'throughly though imperfectly regenerate, and 'hereupon convinced, and sensible of that evil of 'Sin, that misery in themselves, that vanity in the 'Creature, and that necessity, sufficiency, and excellency of Jesus Christ, that they abhor this 'evil, bewail that misery, and turn their Hearts 'from that vanity, and most affectionately accept

'pting of Christ for their Saviour and Lord, to 'bring them unto God the Chief Good, and pre-'sent them perfectly just before him, do accordingly enter into a cordial Covenant with him, and to 'deliver up themselves unto him, and herein per-'severe unto their lives end.

Now all the Children of God, all the People of God, may be assured of this glory; for, *First*, God hath ordained and prepared this glory for his People: This Kingdom is prepared before the *foundation of the world*, *Mat.* 25. God hath predestinated his Children to this glorious Inheritance, *Eph.* 1. 5, 11. *Rom.* 8. 29, 30. 2 *Thess.* 2. 13. God hath prepared for them a City, *Heb.* 11. 16. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. *Matt.* 20. 23. The Saints are *Vessels of Mercy*, before prepared unto glory, *Rom.* 9. 23. And those, in time, he translates out of Satan's Kingdom, into the Kingdom of his dear Son, and by his Spirit of Grace, by his Word of Grace, by his Fatherly Chastisements, by his Mercies, he doth by degrees make meet and fit for this glorious *Inheritance with his Saints in light*, *Col.* 1. 12, 13. And surely, God's Counsel shall stand, and his Decrees be fulfilled; *Therefore blessed are they whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his Inheritance*, Psal. 33. 11, 12.

Secondly, This Glory is *purchased* also, as was said before: It is alone by the Blood of Jesus, that we have entrance into Heaven; therefore do the Saints sing forth his Praises, for that he hath redeemed them out of every Nation by his Blood, and made them Kings and Priests to God, *Rev.* 5. 9, 10. So that either Christ must lose the price of his Blood and Sufferings, and never see the Travel of his Soul, but all his pain and expectations be lost; or else, for certain, there remains for the

Saints this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

Thirdly, This Glory is *promiſed* alſo: God, that cannot lye, hath promiſed Eternal Life, *Tit.* 1. 2. *Luk.* 12. 32. & 22. 19. *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom.* 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. *Matth.* 25. 34. *Jam.* 2. 5. *Rev.* 2. 7, 10, 11, 17. *Heb.* 10. 34. with many other places. So that if the Purpoſe and Decree of God be certain, if the Purchaſe of Chriſt be certain, if the Promiſes of the faithful God be certain, *all* which are moſt ſure and certain, then alſo it is moſt ſure and certain, that the Children of God *ſhall* moſt aſſuredly one day receive this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

And now, O my Soul! how long *ſhall* thy fooliſh Heart deceive thee? how long *wilt* thou ſet thy Affections on things *below*, upon lying dying Vanities? When wilt thou draw off, and mind thy Everlaſting Reſt in good-earneſt, and lay out thy ſelf to the utmoſt, to ſecure thy Title to it? *Lord, be merciful to me, according to thy loving kindneſs: and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out all my Tranſgreſſions.*

Thus have I ſaid a little concerning this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, of the Preparatives to it, of the Properties of it, and of the People that *ſhall certainly* poſſeſs it, to their everlaſting conſolation. And what *ſhall* I ſay now, but that Shame ſhould cover my Face, and Sorrow fill my Heart, for that I am ſo *little*, oh! ſo *little affected* with theſe great things: Oh, what a hard earthly Heart have I! Oh, that *all* thoſe that *ſhall* read or hear what I have written, may have their Hearts more affected with theſe things, and that

they

they may be perſwaded and enabled in the ſtrength of *God*, to put forth all their Power, in the uſe of all means, while they have time, to be aſſured on good grounds, that they are the perſons deſigned for this Glory: And, oh that you and I would now examine our Hearts and States about this.

Let us in the preſence of *God* aſk our ſelves theſe few ſerious Queſtions: Are we the Children of *God*, they only are Heirs to this Glory? Have we, out of a true ſenſe of our Sin and Miſery, heartily accepted of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for our only Lord and Saviour, really yielded up our whole ſelves to his government? Are we truly regenerated, our Natures changed, *God's* Image repaired on us, and his Spirit living and ruling in us? Do we hold out the Life of Chriſt in our Life, and are we like *God*? Have we actually entred into Covenant with *God* in *Chriſt*, and choſen him for our only Happineſs and Portion, giving up our ſelves unfeignedly to be the Lord's? Let us deal uprightly with our ſelves, and if our Conſciences can witneſs for us, that it is thus with us, then may we be confident that all our Afflictions ſhall work and prepare us for that Glory.

I proceed now to ſhew how thoſe light and ſhort Afflictions of the People of *God* in this World, are ſingularly uſeful and influential to work them for, and to work for them this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. And that theſe wayes.

Firſt, By diſcovering, imbittering, curing, and removing thoſe things, which undiſcovered, uncured, and uncleanſed, would utterly deprive us of that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. What thoſe things are, you may eaſily judge; they are our Sins, our Corruptions, our Iniquities,

the Evils of our Hearts and Lives, the filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit; theſe not purged away, will moſt certainly exclude from *Glory*; as, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Col.* 3. 5, 6. *Rev.* 21. 27. *No unclean thing ſhall ever enter into the* New Jeruſalem.

Now Afflictions are uſeful to diſcover Sin, to aggravate and imbitter Sin, to cleanſe and cure the Soul, and ſo to prepare it for Glory.

(1.) To diſcover Sin: Afflictions enlighten mens Eyes; One calls Afflictions the *Chriſtian's Eye-bright*. Man is full of *Self-love*, and this Love is blind and blinding; and Man's Heart is deceitful and ignorant, his Mind is dark; Man is born blind, ſpiritually blind; Men ſee not their Sin and Miſery, *Rev.* 3. 17. until God diſcover their Sins to them, which He doth, as by his Word and Spirit, ſo by Afflictions, *Deut.* 8. 2. *Gen.* 42. 22. 1 *Kin.* 17. 18. God doth by his Rod ſhew Men their Iniquities. A very *Pharaoh* ſees, and acknowledgeth his Sin in his Affliction: So did the Jews, *Iſa.* 59. 11. And it's uſual for men to cry out on their Sins in their Trouble, *Oh then, my Pride, my Covetouſneſs, my Prophaneneſs, my Frowardneſs*, &c. of which they would not hear before.

(2*ly.*) Afflictions are very uſeful to aggravate and imbitter Sin: Thoſe Sins that were ſweet in time of Proſperity, and ſeemed ſmall, or nothing but *Mole-hills*, as it were, light and little, prove bitter and grievous, even as heavy as Mountains. Were not *David*'s Sins ſo to him? See *Pſal.* 38. 3, 4, 5.

Our Lord Jeſus, in *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. maketh this ſenſe of the bitterneſs of Sin, a fit qualification of Souls to come to him, that in him they may find Reſt, which Reſt is the beginning at leaſt of that

that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* When and where Sin is aggravated, and becomes bitter and burdenſome to a Soul, then and there Chriſt, Grace, and Glory becomes ſweet and amiable. Uſually in Proſperity Sin is ſweet, or at leaſt accounted ſmall: Is it not a little one? Oh, the Excuſes, Shifts, Evaſions, and Pleas that in Proſperity men ſtudy to extenuate and leſſen Sin! They feel but little weight in great Sins; the Sins of Youth, Vain-talking, Jeſting, officious Lying, neglect of Duty, worldly Talk on the Lord's day, *&c.* who feels the ponderous weight of ſuch Sins in time of Proſperity? Now Afflictions ſerve to imbitter ſweet Sins, and to aggravate ſmall ſins. *Job* 13. 26, 27. then he remembers the Sins of his Youth, and looks on them otherwiſe than he did before. In Youth great Sins ſeem ſmall; as Diſobedience to Parents, waſting time, prophaning the Lord's day, Lying, *&c.* but in Afflictions they lye heavy; as we ſee in *Joſeph*'s Brethren, *Gen.* 42. 22.

(3*ly.*) To cure and cleanſe Sin, *Pſal.* 119. 67. *Jerem.* 31. 18. Eminent is the Example of *Manaſſes*, on whom Afflictions wrought a wonderful change, 2 *Chron.* 33. And this comes to paſs, in that Afflictions, when *God* bleſſeth them, they work Repentance: This is one of God's ends in ſending Afflictions upon his People, *his Children, whom he loves dearly, Dan.* 11. 33, 34, 35. It is to make them white and clean, to purge away their Iniquity, *Iſa.* 27. 9.

And thus Afflictions are influential on God's People, to work them for, and to work for them *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; for none are fit for this glory until ſin be imbittered to them, and they purged and cleanſed from their

Sins in the Fornace of Affliction, but all through the vertue of the Blood of Chriſt, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7, 9.

Secondly, Afflictions are uſeful to prepare for *Glory*, by being means of God's Appointment and Bleſſing, to work gracious and happy Changes on men, without which they can never come to glory. All men muſt have mighty, great, and wonderful Changes made upon them, before they can be glorified: Now, to effect theſe gracious Changes, God uſeth various means, as principally his Spirit, his Word, his Rod; and many times he makes his Rod to do that, and to work that great Change on Men, which his Spirit and Word, without the Rod, could not do, becauſe of Mens reſiſtance of the Spirit and Word; but when the Rod comes, they cannot reſiſt that. By the Rod he makes the Proud to ſtoop and become humble, as in *Nebuchadnezzar's* Caſe, &c. The Rod and the Word work Wonders, when God by his Spirit works in them and with them. Afflictions change, even ſuch as were Beaſts, into Men, yea, into Saints: *Jer.* 31. 18. *I was* (ſaith *Ephraim*) *as a Bullock, a Beaſt, before I was chaſtized; but being chaſtized, I ſpake like a man, yea, like a child of God.* Afflictions working effectually, work this Change. *Pſal.* 119. 67. ſo on *Manaſſes*; many a Child of God can witneſs this Truth.

Thirdly, Afflictions both drive and draw God's People nearer to him; they wandered before, they went a whoring from God after other Lovers; but Afflictions bring them home, *Iſai.* 142. 4, 5. As the natural Spirits in the Body retire inward, and get cloſe to the Heart in cold weather, and in any danger outward; ſo the Souls of God's People draw nea-

neareſt to *God* in times of Storms and Tempeſts in the World: *Pſal.* 31. from *ver.* 9, to 16. his Troubles made him take Sanctuary in God, and to truſt in him: *I truſted in the Lord; I ſaid, Thou art my God.*

Fourthly, Afflictions deſtroy that great Impediment that unfits for Glory, and that is Earthly-mindedneſs, inordinate Love of the Creature, *Phil.* 3. 19. Earthly-mindedneſs fits for Deſtruction, and not for Salvation: Afflictions are intended to wean our Hearts from the World, to crucifie our Affections to Earthly things: And this effect they had on our Apoſtle here, and upon the Primitive Chriſtians, as Verſe the laſt; *We look not* (ſay they) *on thoſe things which are ſeen, for they are temporal: All Creature-enjoyments, which Worldlings ſet their Hearts upon, and labour ſo eagerly after, we value them not, we care not much for them, our Hearts are weaned from them, we are crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to us; but we look to thoſe things which are not ſeen; we mind, and think on, and hope, and believe, and joy in thoſe things which are not ſeen; our Hearts are in Heaven, ſet upon the unſeen God, the unſeen Glory there, the unſeen Jeſus.* And whence came they to be wrought into this bleſſed heavenly frame, but much by the Bleſſing of God on their Afflictions, God's Spirit working in and with their Afflictions this deadneſs of Affection to the World, and raiſing up their Hearts towards Heaven? So their Afflictions were uſeful to them, to prepare them for Glory.

Fifthly, By working in us, and exerciſing in us thoſe Graces to which Glory is promiſed: *Rom.* 5. 3, 5. *Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Ex-*

perience,

perience, and Experience Hope: Yea, God's Spirit makes Afflictions uſeful to work Holineſs, *Heb.* 12. 10. to make God's Children partakers of his Holineſs, *without which no man ſhall ſee God.* So *Jam.* 1. 12. *Happy is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed, he ſhall receive a crown of glory, which God hath promiſed to them that love him.* And in hope of this glory God's People rejoyce in their Tribulations.

Sixthly, Afflictions quicken God's People to all diligence and ſeriouſneſs in the uſe of all Gods means to obtain Glory; they quicken to Self-examination: *I conſidered my ways*, ſaith *David*: They make them ſearch their Hearts, and try their ways: Afflictions make them put away their Idols, helping on the work of Reformation, quicken them to Prayer; then they cry unto the Lord, and pour out their Hearts before him, and God loves to hear their Cries; then they wreſtle with God in Prayer, and then they are ſerious in their Reproofs, Admonitions, and Inſtructions of others; then alſo they labour to act their Faith and their Love to God and Chriſt, and to *ſet their Affections upon things above*, and to look to their Sincerity and Uprightneſs. Unto all thoſe things we are too backward in time of Proſperity, but in trouble we are awakened and quickened.

Laſtly, Afflictions prepare God's People for glory, by working in them ſtrong Deſires, fervent Pantings and Breathings after that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* When holy *David* was in a barren Wilderneſs, where no Waters of Earthly Comforts were to be had, oh! then his Soul, and Fleſh, and all, did thirſt after God.

Pſal.

Pſal. 63. 1, 2, 3, 8. then his Soul followed hard after God. So *Pſal.* 42. 1, 2, 3, 4. in Proſperity our Souls follow too hard after the Creature, after the lying, dying vanities of this World: Oh, how are we enamoured with theſe fading Beauties and Braveries! How eagerly do we purſue the Profits and Pleaſures of the World! we may with Shame and Sorrow confeſs it; but when our Heavenly Father ſtrips us of all our pleaſant things, plucks our faireſt Flowers out of our Hands, and ſnatches our deareſt Comforts out of our Boſoms, oh, then what Breathings and Pantings after God, the light of his Countenance, and the manifeſtations of his Love! When Earth is gone, then Heaven is welcome; when the Creature is gone, then Chriſt is ſweet.

Before I come to the Application, three Queſtions ſhall be reſolved.

Q. 1. *How muſt Afflictions be ſo born, as that they may thus work?*

2. *How muſt they be improved to attain this end?*

3. *Who are the People intereſted in this Priviledge?*

Q. 1. *How muſt Afflictions be born, that they may work thus, to prepare us for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?* Of all theſe Queſtions I have treated on other Texts, which may be ſeen in my Notes. Yet briefly,

Anſw. That our Afflictions may thus work, we muſt be ſure to bear them as Chriſtians; our Carriage and Deportment in them, and under them, muſt be as becometh Chriſtians, that is, in ſuch a Chriſtian manner as Chriſt did bear his Sufferings. We muſt ſet Chriſt before us for our Example, to imi-

imitate him; and we muſt ſet the Saints of God before us for our Example alſo, and bear our Afflictions as they bore theirs: And alſo, we muſt bear them according to the Rules of Chriſtianity ſet down in the Goſpel; and that is, we muſt bear our Afflictions quietly, ſilently, patiently, ſubmiſſively, contentedly, willingly, cheerfully, and conſtantly: So did our Lord Jeſus, and ſo did the Saints; and ſo muſt we, if we will have this great benefit by them, that they may prepare us for Glory?

Q. 2. *How muſt we improve them?*

Anſ. By the conſcientious practice of their Duties.

Firſt, Serious Conſideration. In the day of Adverſity conſider; *Eccleſ.* 7. 14. Do we ſuffer? Let us conſider for whom, for what, from whom we ſuffer? Conſider, what our Lord hath ſuffered for us, what our Sins have deſerved, and what our ſpecial Duties are in time of Afflictions: Let us fill up our Thoughts with theſe ſerious conſiderations, and dwell ſome time in the Meditation of them, and let them ſink into our Minds, and it will much help us in the ſpiritual improvement of our Afflictions for our great advantage.

The want of this due conſideration God chargeth on the Jews as a very great Sin, *Jer.* 5. 3. *I have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved*, &c. God expects, that when he ſmites us, we ſhould lay it to Heart, ponder upon it, and conſider it, or elſe know this, that there is a more dreadful ſtroke of hardneſs upon thy Heart, than there is upon thy out-comforts; for then, without this due Conſideration, no Duty is performed, nor

Bene-

Benefit received by all our Afflictions.

(1.) In time of Affliction conſider the vanity of the Creature. When God deprives us of our outward Comforts, takes away our deareſt Relations, now conſider what vain things they are, that we promiſe our ſelves ſo much Comfort and Contentment in; how ſoon they wither, one ſtroke from God ſeparates us and them, they are gone. We can talk of the Vanity of the Creature, but it is never ſo well learned, as when God teacheth by our own Experience; other mens Experience is not ſo much to us. *Iſa.* 40. 6, 7. *All fleſh is graſs*; all Creature-enjoyments are withering graſs.

(2.) Conſider the Evil of Sin: Are we in any Affliction, are we in Pain, under any Trouble? Let us now conſider what Sin is, which is the cauſe of all thoſe Miſeries. Theſe are the bitter Fruits of Sin.

(3.) Conſider alſo the End and Deſign of God in our Afflictions. Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me. What Provocation have we given God? What have we done?

(4.) What Errand and Meſſage is this Affliction come upon? Surely God hath ſent it upon ſome Errand; what is his meaning?

(5.) Conſider alſo the merciful and gracious Diſpoſition of God towards his People in Affliction, *Deut.* 8. 5. *Heb.* 12. 6. *Rev.* 3. 19. He is grieved for them, *Iſa.* 63. 9. In all their Afflictions he is afflicted, he doth not afflict willingly, he loves them when he corrects them.

(6.) Conſider God's fatherly Affection to his Children in Affliction; *Lam.* 3. 33. *Judg.* 10. 16. *Jer.* 31. 20. *My bowels are turned for him.* *Heb.* 4. 15. *Zech.* 2. 8. they that touch them, touch the apple of his Eye. *Pſal.* 103. 13. *God pitieth them*

as

as a Father doth his Children: Therefore let us pray as the Church. *Iſa.* 26. 8. *In the way of thy judgments have we waited for thee.* So *Iſa.* 63. 15.

(7.) Conſider God's gracious moderation of his Peoples Afflictions. *Iſa.* 27. 7, 8. He afflicts in meaſure, *He ſtayeth his rough wind in the day of the eaſt wind:* He doth not puniſh as we deſerve, *Job* 34. 23. *Pſal.* 103. 10. *Job* 11. 6. (2.) He will keep us from ſinking, *Lam.* 3. 22. 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9, 10. Though *troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; perplexed, yet not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed.* 2 *Cor.* 6. 9. ſee his gracious Promiſe. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Job 23. 6. *Will he plead againſt me with his great power? No: but he would put ſtrength in me.* Pſal. 37. 24. *The Lord upholdeth with his hand.* (3.) He will not be always wrath: Iſa. 57. 16. *It ſhall be for a moment, and no more.* Lam. 3. 31. *He will not caſt off for ever.* 2 Cor. 1. 10. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and will deliver. Pſal. 126. 5. *They that ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy.* (4.) He orders all the Circumſtances of our Troubles; the Time how long; the Place where; the Quality, what kind; the Meaſure, how much. All the Powers of Men and Devils are not able to add a dram to the weight, nor a drop to the meaſure, of what our gracious Father hath appointed for us.

All theſe ſeven Conſiderations will exceedingly help us to make a profitable improvement of our Afflictions, for the preparing of us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And alſo theſe Conſiderations will very much help us to carry and behave our ſelves aright, and as Chriſtians

ſtians under afflictive Providences, which is the right way to attain the benefit of them.

It is an hard thing for a man to carry himſelf well under a ſmiling Providence: but an harder thing for a man to carry himſelf well under a ſmiting Providence; which was hinted before.

Secondly, But a little more to ſhew how we ought to carry our ſelves under Afflictions, that ſo we may receive the Bleſſings and Benefits of them, which we may loſe by our Miſcarriages.

1. When any *Affliction* befals you, *Be ſilent before the Lord, for he hath put you to ſilence.* Do not murmur, quarrel, fret, or be diſcontented: I believe, a better ſign of an honeſt and upright Heart can ſcarcely be found, than for a man to love God the more for his afflicting of him, and to cleave the faſter to God, when God cuts off his earthly Comforts from him: *Oh, be ſilent before the Lord*; *Zech.* 2. 13. *Lam.* 3. 28.

2. Be humble under God's hand, for that is his end in *afflicting*, lye down at his Feet, *Jam.* 4. God is humbling of you, now then humble your own Souls; labour to break your own Hearts in the ſenſe of your Sins, and to lye low before the Lord.

3. Acknowledge God's Righteouſneſs, and juſtifie him, even when he ſtriketh the heavieſt ſtroke; let the blow be never ſo great upon your moſt deſirable Mercies, yet acquit God, do not charge him fooliſhly, and ſay he dealeth hardly. *Pſal.* 51. 4. God muſt be acquitted and juſtified, tho' he ſhould condemn us unto everlaſting wrath. *Lev.* 26. 41. This is to accept of the puniſhment of our Iniquities.

4. *Search*

4. *Search your hearts, and try your ways.* Lam. 3. 40. find out the *Achans*, the *Jonahs*, the *Davids*. *Jer.* 8. 6. when the Lord ſends any *Affliction* upon his People, he hearkens to hear what they ſpeak: *The Lord hearkened and heard, and there was none that ſmote upon his thigh, ſaying, What have I done?* Our Work now in *Affliction* is to enquire, What Sins have I committed? what Duties have I omitted? Now make a diligent ſearch.

5. Pour out your Hearts to God in Prayer: this is our great relief and eaſe in time of *Affliction*: *Jam.* 5. 13. *Is any afflicted? let him pray:* Now pray earneſtly, fervently, cry to God: Let us never think to heal the wound that the ſtroke of God hath made any other way: go not to merry Company, and the Affairs and Delights of the World for a Cure: Pray for a Bleſſing on the Rod: Pray that God will ſhew you his End in afflicting you, and that he will make up what he hath removed from you by the enjoyment of himſelf: Pray for Suffering Graces, for *Faith* and *Patience*: It is a ſad thing when *Afflictions* are to Men, if they know not how to eaſe themſelves by Prayer.

6. If by *Affliction* the Lord diſcover any particular Evil to thy Soul, then break off that Wickedneſs by ſpeedy Repentance and Reformation, or elſe you fruſtrate the very End of God in *afflicting* you, and you provoke the Lord to go on with ſtroke upon ſtroke, until you are conſumed. If the Lord ſmite any of you for any particular Sin you live in, and he convince your Conſcience of it, do not continue in the practice of that Sin for a World; for when once the Lord taketh up his Rod, he will never lay it down; if he have Love to thy Soul, he will ſmite thee deeper and deeper

until he have ſtript thee of all thy deareſt Enjoyments, and leave thee ſtark naked, that he may ſeparate thee and thy Sin. But when the Lord intends to puniſh a Soul eternally in Hell, he will not do ſo; but whom he loves, and intends to ſave eternally, he will ſmite and ſmite, and never leave ſmiting, until he ſeparate them and their Luſts.

7. Laſtly, give up your whole Hearts entirely to God in Chriſt; for this end God cuts off our choiceſt earthly Mercies, that we may entirely give up our ſelves to Chriſt. Theſe things ſtood in the way of Jeſus Chriſt, therefore God removes them, and ſo makes room in the Heart for himſelf, and for Chriſt.

O, now ſay, O my Soul! thou haſt waſted too much of thine Affections on thoſe poor periſhing things; this Mercy, and that Enjoyment, hath taken off thy Heart from Jeſus Chriſt; this Relation hath lain between thy Heart and Chriſt: Well, now the Lord hath taken theſe away, oh! now my Soul, let Jeſus Chriſt ſtand in the Breach that is made, and let him fill it up: Let him come in the room of that Mercy that is gone. If we labour thus to make up the Breach, the ſtroke will be a ſtroke of Love, and by this we may know that *Affliction* comes in love to our Souls, when it makes us love God better, and ſtick faſter to God than before, and cleave more to Duty than before: That which endeth in our Love to God, did come from God's Love to us. Theſe are the ſtrokes from a Father's Hand, and he will heal them in his due time, which is the beſt time. So much of the *Second*.

Thirdly, If we would improve our *Afflictions* ſo, as that they may be means of preparing us for that

that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, we muſt carefully avoid the uſual Extreams that men are liable to in times of Affliction, that is neither to ſlight them, nor to ſink under them: *Prov.* 3. 11. *Deſpiſe not thou the chaſtnings of the Lord, neither faint when thou art corrected of him.*

(1.) Slight not *Afflictions*, but value them, for *Afflictions* are of God's ſending, they ariſe not out of the Duſt, they are God's Meſſengers; yea, ſufferings for Chriſt are God's gifts. *Phil.* 1. 29. (2.) They are Love-tokens ſent us from a loving Father: *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom he loveth he corrects.* (3.) They are wholſom Phyſick, needful for us, to cure the mortal Diſeaſes of our Souls, ſent us from a moſt wiſe and faithful Phyſician, who preſcribes and orders every Ingredient in our Potion. (4.) They are Marks of the true way to Heaven. *Act.* 14. 22. (5.) Preſervatives againſt the Venom of Sin, to prevent the infection of it. (6.) They are *Covenant-Mercies*. *Pſal.* 89. 32. (7.) Meanes to prepare us for glory, and to prevent our eternal condemnation. 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. Oh, could we but thus receive our *Afflictions*, and ſo take and bear them, and ſo improve them after this manner, what ſingular good would they do us, and what Comfort might we have in them?

And as we muſt not deſpiſe them, ſo we muſt not faint under them neither, but patiently and quietly ſubmit to the holy will of God, and reſign up our ſelves to his Good-will and Pleaſure; as was ſhewed before.

Fourthly, We improve *Afflictions* when we are exerciſed by them. *Heb.* 12. 10. then we do reap the Fruit of them. Now this Exerciſe conſiſts (as a worthy Divine obſerves) in theſe things:

Jer. 9. 24. *Ezek.* 22. 29. *Isa.* 64. 5. to wit, 1st, About the *Affliction* that smarts; 2dly, About our Hearts that feel; 3dly, About the Hand that smites.

1st, About the Affliction it self, the Rod that is upon us; we must be exercised in *hearing* Work, in *bearing* Work, and in *doing* work: 1. In *hearing* Work; *Mic.* 6. 9. *Hear ye the rod, and him that hath appointed it:* The voice of the Rod is the whole Word of God: *Three words* (saith he) *especially the Rod speaks*; 1. *Thou hast sinned*; 2. *God is displeased*; 3. *Return and Repent:* We must hear and obey these Voices.

2dly, In *bearing* Work; *Mic.* 7. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord.* Jam. 1. 4. Lam. 3. 27. *Bear thy affliction feelingly, freely, willingly:* Jerem. 10. 24. *waitingly, not growing weary.*

3dly, In *doing* Work, three things are to be done, 1. Kiss the Rod in your Father's Hand, honour it as your Father's Scepter, fear it as his Sword, love it as his Physick. 2. Cast away the Sin that hath provoked it. *Isa.* 30. 22. *Hos.* 14. 8. *Job* 34. 31. 3. Embrace the Covenant of God, for which he pleads. Thus must we be exercised about our *Affliction.*

Secondly, We must be exercised about our Hearts thus:

1. Heart-Consideration of the Rod: *Eccles.* 7. 14. *Weigh well what it is we suffer,* whence it comes, by what provoked, and to what intended; of which before.

2. Heart-breaking under it: *Jer.* 4. 3. *Hos.* 10. 12.

3. Heart-bending: Our Spirits must stoop to the Will of God.

Third-

Thirdly, We muſt be exerciſed about the Hand that ſmites. *Iſa.* 24. 15. to glorifie God in the Fires; 1*ſt*, By abaſing our ſelves: *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes*, ſaid holy *Job*. 2*ly*, By juſtifying God in all his Dealings: *Jer.* 12. 1. *Lam.* 3. 39. *Righteous art thou, O Lord.* 3*ly*, By yielding Reverence, Fear, Obedience, Faith. 4*ly*, Going to God for the Bleſſing of the Rod: And thus exerciſing our ſelves theſe ways, we ſhall improve our *Afflictions* for our ſpiritual Advantage.

Q. 3. *But who are the People intereſted in this great Priviledge, that thoſe ſhort and light Afflictions ſhall work for them, and work them for, this far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?*

Anſw. Surely not all that are *afflicted*; all ſhall not receive this Bleſſing, for ſome grow worſe by *Affliction*; but only the Saints and true Believers, ſuch only as are the Children of God, and ſuch as hold forth the Life of Chriſt in their mortal Fleſh; as Verſ. 10, 11. of this 2 *Cor.* 4. ſuch as walk as Chriſt walked, that follow his Steps; ſuch as look, aim at, and follow after inviſible eternal things principally and chiefly, as Verſe 18; even ſuch, and ſuch only as are exerciſed by Affliction, as was ſhewed before; they, and they only, ſhall reap the quiet and peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs here, and receive that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* hereafter. They that bear Afflictions as Chriſtians, and improve them as Chriſtians, and partake of the Bleſſings of them, they ſhall partake of this Priviledge of being prepared by them for this *weight of glory*.

The

The Application.

Firſt, for Information,

1 *Inf.* I. Then God's Children muſt take heed that they do neither deſpiſe the Chaſtnings of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuked of him: Rev. 3. 11. Seeing they are deſigned for ſuch good ends, as to fit us for glory, we ſhould not ſlight the leaſt Affliction, the leaſt Croſs or Diſappointment that doth befal us; for how little ſoever it be, it is our Father's Rod, his Meſſenger, his Hand. Nor ſhould we faint under any Affliction, how great and heavy ſoever it be, becauſe he that lays it on, doth it in love to our Souls, and will lay on no more than he will enable us to bear, for he will uphold us with his Hand.

1. We muſt not deſpiſe them, as noted before, to which I ſhall add this. We are ſaid to deſpiſe a Meſſenger ſent us, when we do not bid him welcome, nor comply with his Meſſage, but turn him off without his Errands end. We muſt not deal ſo with any Affliction, any of God's Meſſengers; we muſt not be unwilling of Affliction, nor be diſcontented at them, but thankfully receive them as Tokens of our Father's Love to us, and as his wholeſome Phyſick, which our Souls *ſtand* in need of; as was alſo before noted, and to which I ſhall add a little more, becauſe it is an hard thing to bid Affliction welcome, and to bleſs God for taking, as well as for giving, as *Job* did.

And though we have no warrant to pray for Affliction (although we may pray that God would uſe all means to do our Souls good, and to prepare us for glory) yet they *muſt* be thankfully received, when God ſends them, and *God* is to be praiſed for them.

them. This is a hard Leſſon to Fleſh and Blood, who can bear it? Yet it is our expreſs Duty, *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; which I think mainly reſpects the Sufferings of the Saints for Chriſt, in which we are bound to rejoice and be glad. *Matth.* 5. 12. yet not excluding other *Afflictions*: So 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. *Rom.* 5. 2, 3. glory in Tribulations. *Job* 1. laſt.

Obj. *But is it poſſible, that when Afflictions come on us, as loſs of our dear Relations, loſs of our Eſtate and Liberty, loſs of Health, when grievous Pains are on our Bodies, is it poſſible we can bid theſe welcome, and rejoice in them? Or, if it be poſſible, is it neceſſary?*

Anſ. 1. *God* himſelf grants, that the *Afflictions* of his People are not for the preſent joyous, but grievous, *Heb.* 12. 11. not to be delighted in: *God* allows his poor People to complain, and grieve under them; which notes his Tenderneſs towards them: He himſelf takes notice of their *Afflictions*, *Exod.* 2. 25. *Jer.* 31. 18. *Pſal.* 56. 8. he telleth their Wandrings, and puts their Tears into his Bottle. He himſelf is grieved for their *Afflictions*, *Judg.* 10. 16. his bowels work towards them, and *in all their afflictions he is afflicted*, *Iſa.* 63. 9. Now, if our *Afflictions* be grievous to *God*, it will not diſpleaſe him if they be grievous to us. Nay, *God* expects that we ſhould grieve for grieving him by our Sins. We never find in Scripture *God*'s People to be blamed for their grieving and complaining of their *Afflictions*, unleſs they were immoderate: *God* doth not forbid the workings of Nature; nay, *God* loves to ſee Nature work orderly and regularly. *Aaron*'s Caſe, and *Ezekiel*'s were extraordinary, and not to be drawn into Example.

Chaſtening

Chastening is a displeased Father's Rod, therefore there must be a Child-like grief, shame, and sorrow. *Numb.* 12. 14. it is the Rod of Love: There must be *Grief* and *Love* in us his Children; He rebukes and loves, we must grieve and love. So that

It must be granted, that in the pain, and smart, and trouble that is on us, simply considered, we cannot rejoice, nor bid the Burthen welcome: A Man should have an Heart worse than of a Beast to do so: Nor is it required, but the contrary is required, namely, to humble our selves under the mighty Hand of *God*; and to be sensible of his strokes, to be *afflicted*, and *weep and mourn*, *Jam.* 4. 8.

2. But the sweet Fruit, the Blessing of *Affliction*, that *God* intends *Affliction* shall bring forth in us, which we must pray for, hope for, believe for, and to which we must have an Eye as soon as the *Affliction* comes; this is that we must rejoyce in, and bless God for, and so, in prospect of this good Fruit, of this Blessing, and in hope of it, we must entertain our *Afflictions* thankfully, as thus: *I am afflicted in my Relations, in my Estate, in my Body; here are grievous, painful, sad strokes; but, Lord, I hope all this is in love to my Soul, I hope the Fruit will be good, and therefore in hope of the good Fruit, I [illegible] and bless thy Name, and most earnestly [illegible] of all thy Chastisements.* So that, if we duly consider, and firmly believe, that our *Afflictions* are Testimonies of *God's* Fatherly Love to us, and care for us; as *Heb.* 11. *Rev.* 3. 19. *Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten*, saith our Lord; it being [illegible] of *God's Wrath* not to be [illegible] *Let them alone*, saith God, *I will* [illegible] *Luk.* 6. 22. And if we could [illegible]

Afflictions are the signs of our Sonship, and the signs of the true way to Heaven, that they are for our profit, to make us conformable to Christ, and to prevent our eternal condemnation, and that we have need of them, and that they shall prepare us for eternal glory: I say, these things firmly believed, and duly considered, we shall be able thankfully to receive our Afflictions, and to bless the Lord, in hope to receive those singular Blessings from them, *Rejoycing in Hope, patient in Tribulation, Rom.* 12. 12. It is our want of Faith in *God*'s Promises, concerning those sweet Fruits of Affliction, that we do not cheerfully bear them: *Lord, encrease our Faith, our Hope, our Patience.*

There is *Joy and Peace in believing*; *Rom.* 15. 13. Had we more Faith, we should have more joy and less grief in our Afflictions. We are glad when our Physick works, though it put us to pain, in hope of Relief and Benefit by it; let us do so when *God*'s Physick works, and we shall be sure to have Benefit by all.

Obj. *But are not Afflictions Tokens of God's Displeasure? and, can we, or ought we to rejoice in them then?*

Ans. They are so indeed against the Wicked, and so are all the Mercies they enjoy: And they are Tokens of *God*'s Displeasure against the Sins of his People, but Tokens of Love to their Souls. *Psal.* 99. 8. *Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions. Isa.* 57. 17, 18. and so are Mercies too, *Isa.* 38. 17.

Q. *Can we rejoyce when God takes away our choicest Earthly Comforts, our dearest Enjoyments from us?*

Ans.

Anſ. Yes, after we have been ſenſible of *God's* Hand, and have been humbled under it; and if it make way for better Mercies, and *God* be pleaſed to beſtow more of himſelf, more of his Spirit, more of his Grace and Love upon us, then we ſhall have cauſe to rejoyce, and to be thankful. So much of the firſt part of our Duty in our Afflictions, That we muſt not *deſpiſe* them.

II. The ſecond is, That we muſt not faint under them, nor grow weary of them. This is the other Extream that we muſt carefully avoid. Seeing Afflictions, which are but light and ſhort, work for us, and work us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, therefore we muſt not grow weary under them.

By this wearineſs, in general, I mean, a ſinking of Spirit, a deſpondency of Heart under the Rod, when a man is, as we ſay, Creſt-faln, and without Spirit, ſo that he cannot bear up, his Spirit fails in the day of Adverſity; when a man is willing to throw off the burthen, before *God* takes it off; as *Job* 4. 5. *Pſal.* 88. 14, 15. *I am afflicted, and ready to dye, from my youth up: while I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off.* Thus ſpake *Heman*, a choice Saint.

Here I ſhall briefly ſhew, 1. the *Cauſe*; 2. the *Cure* of this Wearineſs, that we may the better avoid it.

1. *Firſt*, the *Cauſe*, and that is manifold, as firſt, from Man himſelf; we our ſelves are the Cauſes of this Wearineſs, in a three-fold reſpect, as, 1. Our not expecting Troubles: In Health we look not

for Sickness, and when Troubles come unexpectedly, they make us weary. 2*ly*, Our over-valuing of our earthly Comforts. 3*ly*, Because, in truth, we are more sensible of our Losses, than of our Enjoyments.

2. In regard of the Affliction it self: 1*st*, When it swells to any great height: 2*ly*, When Afflictions are multiplied one upon the back of another. 3*ly*, When they be of long continuance: 4*ly*, When inflicted on the nobler parts, and upon the Spirit: 5*ly*, When but little support, but few Comforters, or miserable Comforters, few to help to bear the burthen: 6*ly*, When they are heavy, and ordinarily they are heavy, because Sin is light, and Glory is light; for when Sin lies heavy on the Soul, and Heaven much in the Heart, Afflictions are much lighter on the Body; *Nil sentit in nervo, cum anima sit in Cœlo.*

3. In regard of *God*; He puts Lead into some mens Burthens sometimes; he sets home Sin and Wrath upon the Conscience, and then men grow weary.

4. In regard of the Devil, he doth his utmost to imbitter every Trouble, and adds his Temptations to make it more intolerable. So much for the *Cause* of Weariness.

2. *Secondly*, for the *Cure*. We must labour to avoid this Weariness under Affliction; and that we may, take these Directions:

1 *Direct.* 1*st*, Let us urge our Heavenly Father's Command upon our own hearts, and the Command of our Lord Jesus upon our selves: See the express Command of God, *Prov.* 3. 11. *Heb.* 12. 5. *Be not weary of* his *chastisements: faint not when* [illegible] *art corrected*: Thus speaks our *Heavenly Father*

his Children: And the Command of our Lord Christ is expres also, *John* 14. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled:* Whatever *affliction* befals you, let not your Hearts be troubled. Let us urge these Commands upon our selves: Consider we, 1. Is there any cause of Heart-trouble, when our Heavenly Father, the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, hath his will, which we daily pray for? All our Troubles are by the Will of God. 2. When the great Proprietor and Owner of all things doth most wisely and most righteously dispose of his own? 3. When we are called to render back but what we had borrowed? Our Health, Estates, Liberty, Relations, Life it self, all were but lent us. 4. When lesser Mercies are removed, that greater and better may be bestowed? 5. When we have our Iniquities purged, which is the sure Evidence that they are pardoned; and that we are made more conformable to Christ, and so fitted for nearer and fuller Communion with *God?* 6. When our *Graces* are tryed and acted, and so made more apparent and illustrious? 7. When by all our *Afflictions* we are prepared for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?* Let us weigh all these things well, and they will help us against Wearines: And for our further help against Heart-trouble, see my Discourse on *John* 14. 1, 2, 3.

2. That we may not grow weary of *God*'s Chastisements, let us urge Reason also upon our selves, as thus: If I grow weary, I break the expres Command of my Heavenly Father, and disobey the Counsel of my Dear Lord: 2. If I grow weary, it argues my Unbelief; for, who would grow weary of long and grievous *Afflictions*, that did fully believe the gracious ends and

deſigns of *God* in them; and his ſweet Promiſes to his *afflicted People*; and that *Afflictions* are in the Covenant; that they are the Fruits of *God's* Fatherly Love, and ſhall ſurely work for our good; that the Croſs is the way to the Crown: Who believes theſe things, and yet is weary?

Again: By Wearineſs we make our Burthens heavier than *God* intends them to be; Cheerfulneſs and Patience makes them lighter: The like *Affliction* to a patient, humble, contented Chriſtian is much lighter than to another fretful, weary, and diſcontented perſon.

Now, it is poſſible we may make our Burthens heavier than *God* intends them, thus: 1*ſt*, When we think no Trouble like ours: Conſider *Job's* Caſe; Trouble was upon all his Relations, all his Eſtate, upon his Body, Soul, and All. 2*ly*, When we let looſe our Paſſions, to run whither they will, without any reſtraint: 3*ly*, When we refuſe the Comforts that *God* ſends us: So did good *Jacob*, *Gen.* 37. 35. 4*ly*, When we continually fix our Thoughts on our *Afflictions*, and are always poring on them, ſo that all the Mercies that we enjoy are quite ſwallowed up: And have we any reaſon to greaten our own Burthens? And again, by our Wearineſs we diſhonour *God*, and diſcomfort our ſelves, and diſcourage others.

3. *Thirdly*, Serious Conſideration, laying to heart and pondering upon ſeveral things that may prevent this wearineſs; as,

1. Conſider what this *Wearineſs* ſignifieth and implies: it hath very ill ſignifications; for, to be *weary*, ſignifieth a *want*, or at leaſt, a great weakneſs of Faith, for he that believeth maketh not haſte; want of *Hope*, for we muſt hope to the end;

end; want of *Patience*, for *Patience* muſt have her perfect work, which is to laſt as long as Trouble laſts; want of *Love*, for *Love* endeareth all things; or, at leaſt, a great weakneſs of thoſe *Graces*.

2. Conſider, *God* is long-ſuffering, He hath waited long on us.

3. It hath been the Practice of all the Saints, in all Ages, to wait on *God*.

4. That by our wearineſs we limit the Holy One of *Iſrael*, and do indeed call in queſtion all the glorious Attributes of *God*, his Power, Wiſdom, Faithfulneſs; Let us conſider theſe things.

5. Conſider, that they that ſuffer without wearineſs, they are bleſſed and happy; *Job* 5. 17. *Pſal.* 94. 12. *Jam.* 1. 12. *Bleſſed are they that endure*; that is, that ſuffer without wearineſs.

6. Conſider, that *Afflictions* are ſigns of our Sonſhip; *Heb.* 12. and ſigns of God's Fatherly Love.

7. Conſider God's good and gracious Ends; *Iſa.* 27. 9.

8. Conſider Chriſt's dreadful Sufferings for us.

9. Conſider the many exceeding great and precious Promiſes that God hath made to patient Sufferers, that he will be with them, will ſuſtain them, and in due time will deliver them: Now, if we will think and meditate on thoſe things, and let our Thoughts dwell on them, and ſuffer them to ſink down into our Hearts, and roul and revolve them in our Minds, they will much ſupport us, and help us againſt wearineſs.

4. A *Fourth* thing we muſt do, to prevent, or cure this Wearineſs under *Affliction*, is ſerious examination of our ſelves, whether we belong to God or no; whether reconciled, regenerated and

born of God, or no; whether united to Chriſt, juſtified and pardoned, or no: If you are, why then ſhould we be weary of *Affliction?* For, if *God* have done ſo many great things for us, ſurely he loves us, and will afflict us no more, nor no longer than need: Such a Soul will ſay, *If the Lord pleaſe to become my God in Covenant, to give me to Chriſt, and Chriſt to me; to pardon my Sins, and take me into his favour, and ſave me at laſt, let him do with my Health, and Eſtate, and Liberty, and Relations, and all, as he pleaſeth.* But if on the contrary, upon examination, we find our ſelves not regenerated and pardoned, it is high time for us to ſet about theſe great works in earneſt, leſt we ſhould be cut off before they be wrought in us, and to ſet in with God in his *Afflictions* on us, for his Rods are one way he takes to bring about theſe gracious works upon us: therefore we ſhould not be weary of them. O labour for the ſenſe of God's Pardoning, Regenerating, Redeeming Love; and labour to clear up to your ſelves, your Intereſt in God by Chriſt, and this will bear you up.

5. *Fifthly*, Labour to get and keep your Conſciences pure and clean, that when there be Troubles without, you may have Peace within: But if God ſtrike you without, and lay on blows on your outward Comforts, your Conſciences may not laſh you within, and charge you with heavier Burthens. If a man have a ſound and whole Back, he can bear an heavy Burthen; but if his back be ſore, a ſmall Burthen will pinch him: Let us therefore make even reckoning with God and our own Conſciences, by renewing our Repentance, our Faith, in the Blood of Jeſus, and by New Obedience; and let us take heed we wrong not, nor wound our Conſciences.

6. *Sixth-*

6. *Sixthly*, Spend many Thoughts on *Zion*, be grieved for the *Afflictions* of *Joſeph*, think upon the Miſeries and Diſtreſſes of many of the Lord's dear Servants, and lay them to Heart: Divert and turn aſide from muſing on your own Troubles only, and let *Sion*'s Sorrows have ſome impreſſion on your Minds.

7. *Seventhly*, Labour to act Faith ſtrongly upon the Inviſible God, and upon that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, prepared in Heaven for you. Moſes* endured, and was not weary, as ſeeing him that is inviſible, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. *having an eye to the recompence of reward.*

Act Faith on God's Almighty Power; he can bring light out of darkneſs, and can make dry Bones live: And upon his infinite wiſdom He, who is only-wiſe and moſt merciful, orders all the circumſtances of your Afflictions, for time, place, quality, and quantity: Act Faith on his Faithfulneſs, Righteouſneſs, Love, Pity and Compaſſion; and labour by Faith to realize the promiſed purchaſed Glory, which Afflictions prepare you for.

Dilate, ſpread, and enlarge your Thoughts and Meditations on thoſe Crowns and Kingdoms, that Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, *that fadeth not away*, reſerved in Heaven for you; thoſe many Manſions in your Father's Houſe, thoſe everlaſting Habitations above; and ſweeten your Spirits with thoſe Thoughts.

8. *Laſtly*, To prevent or cure *Wearineſs*, be not ſlack much in Prayer: Seek the Lord, ſeek his Face continually, ſeek his Strength: *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaſeth*

ſtrength, Iſa. 40. 29, 30, 31. *Jam.* 5. 13. *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Is any afflicted, let him pray*; call upon God in the day of Trouble.

Q. *But is this all we muſt do in Affliction? Muſt we do nothing but pray?*

A. Yes; 1. We muſt ſeek the Lord, and *ſearch our hearts, and try our ways, Lam.* 3. 40. ſeeking God, and ſearching our Hearts, to find out our Sins, muſt go together.

2. Seek the Lord, and hear the Voice of his Rod; *Mic.* 6. 9. *God* ſpeaks many things by Afflictions; all his Rods have Voices; there is an awakening, a diſcovering, an humbling Voice, a purging trying Voice, an inſtructing, teaching, comforting Voice: Let us own *God*'s Hand in all our Afflictions, whoever be the Inſtruments. *It is the Lord hath taken away my Health, my Eſtate, my Friends*: So ſaid holy *Job*; not a word of *Inſtrument*.

3. Seek the Lord, and turn to him with all your Hearts: Turn to him that ſmiteth: It is in vain to ſeek God, if we do not turn from our Sins, by true Repentance and thorow Reformation.

4. Seek the Lord, and act Faith on Jeſus Chriſt. *Hoſ.* 6. 1, 2. *After two days he will revive us.* Luther ſays, *This is the Scripture* Paul *ſpeaks of*, 1 Cor. 15. 4. *Chriſt roſe the third day, according to the Scripture*: What Scripture? *This*, ſaith he: And then the ſence is this. As if the Church ſhould ſay, Our Afflictions and Infirmities may be great, and we may lye in them for a time. So did Chriſt; he was dead, and buried, and lay in the Grave two days, but he was raiſed up the third day. And thus ſhould a Child of God exerciſe his Faith: 'I am

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'thus and thus afflicted, and brought very low,' 'so was Christ, and much more; he was a *Man of* 'Sorrows, though he were the beloved *Son of God*: 'He was delivered up into the Hands of Enemies, 'he was scorned, scourged, crucified, killed, but 'my Condition was never so bad; no Sorrows 'were like Christ's: Never was the Church of 'God, the Cause of God, in so low a condition 'as Christ was, who is the Head of his Church: 'never was Man or Woman in so low a condition as 'Christ was; he lay not only under the wrath 'and malice of Men and Devils, but under his 'Father's wrath also: He was not only brought to 'Death's Door, but [illegible] it self; yea, he was 'sealed up in his Grave, and yet God raised him 'up. Here is Food for Faith: In what depths and dangers soever the Church of God and People of God may be, let us act Faith on the Resurrection of Christ, he was raised up, and so shall we, if we be his; and therefore let us trust in the living God, *who raiseth the dead*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 9.

Thus we see what means to use, that we may not grow weary of God's Chastisements, nor faint under them.

Q. O, but if I knew God did afflict me in Love, I should not grow weary, but patiently and cheerfully bear my Trouble?

A. 1. If thy Heart be drawn out more after God, to love God more, to fear, to please, to follow after God more, it is in love: If thou art more fearful of Sinning against God, and more careful to glorifie him, it is in love; *Psal.* 116. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

2. If

2. If you enjoy the gracious Preſence of *God* with you in your Affliction, his teaching, ſtrengthning, ſanctifying, quieting, ſatisfying, humbling, comforting Preſence with you, then you may conclude, it is in love; *Iſa.* 43 2. *Pſal.* 94. 19. 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. when your inward man is renewed, as your outward periſheth.

3. If your Afflictions make you more conformable to Chriſt, in Meekneſs, Humility, Heavenlyneſs, Patience, Self-denyal, &c.

4. If you be taught by the Spirit and Word, when afflicted by the Rod, how to hate Sin more, to dye to Self and the Vanities of the World more; how to dye to all Relations, and Creature-Comforts more; and how to lift up Chriſt more, and love him more; to prepare for Death more, and mind Heaven more; then you are afflicted in Love: bleſſed are they that are thus taught by Affliction; *Pſal.* 94. 12.

5. If God lay no more on you than he enables you to bear; *Iſa.* 27. 8. *Jer.* 30. 11. & 46. 28. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

6. If you can be willing to lye in the Furnace, until your droſs be conſumed; *Job* 23. 10. *Mic.* 7. 9. Can you cry out, *Lord, remove the Cauſe rather than the Effect: take away my Corruption rather than my Affliction: A Cure, Lord, a Cure of the Diſtempers of my vile Heart; good Lord, a Cure?*

7. If you can live by Faith on the Promiſes in your Affliction; *Iſa.* 41. 10. & 43. 1, 2, 3. & 57. 15. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Job.* 10. 17, 27, 28. *Iſa.* 26. 3. *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. *Heb.* 12. 10. *Hoſ.* 2. 14. *Heb.* 13. 5. *Rom.* 8. 28. *Zech.* 13. 9. *Pſal.* 34. 8. & 84. 11. Let us labour to find theſe ſweet Fruits of God's Fatherly Love to us in our Afflictions, and then we ſhall not grow weary.

2 *Obj.*

2 Obj. *But my Afflictions have been long upon me.*

Anſ. 1. Not ſo long as thy Mercies have been: Canſt thou number the days of thy Health? Have not thy good days been many more than thy evil days?

2. Nor ſo long as thy Sins have been: Thou haſt been a Tranſgreſſor from the Womb, a Sinner from thy Conception; *Pſal.* 51. 5.

3. Nor ſo long as the Afflictions of others it may be far better than you. See the 77th and 88th Pſalms, *Gen.* 15. 12, 13. Four hundred years: *Exod.* 12. 40, 41. *Job* 21. 25. Some have not had a day of health or pleaſure many years; no, not in their Lives: Oh, how ſhould this quiet us under our Troubles, that we may not complain that they are long?

4. The longer thy Afflictions have been on thee, the ſweeter will Heaven at laſt be to thee; *Pſal.* 126. 1, 2, 5, 6. compared. The longer the Storm the ſweeter the Calm; the longer in the Tempeſt, the more welcome the Harbour.

5. Thy Afflictions are not long, but ſhort, if compared with that Eternity of Glory reſerved in Heaven for you; as in the Text; Everlaſting Habitations, Eternal Life, a Crown of Glory *that fadeth not away*: Have an Eye fixed on the Crown, while thou beareſt the Croſs: One moments being in the Boſom of Chriſt, will make thee forget all thy Miſery; oh, long for that good hour.

6. The longer you are in Afflictions, the more ſpiritual Experiences you have of the Love and Care of Chriſt towards you; 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. 2 *Cor.* 12. 5. O, the Love-tokens that Chriſt ſends his Spouſe in the Furnace of Affliction! then he ſpeaks

ſpeaks moſt kindly to her: The bleſſed Martyrs found it ſo.

7. Long Afflictions are but Preparatives, ſometimes to long-liv'd Mercies; as in *Joſeph* and *David*, *Iſa.* 54. 11, 12, 13, 14. If by my long Affliction God make more room in my Heart for himſelf, Son, and Spirit, his Word; if he crucifie my Affections more to the World, and make me more conformable to Chriſt, I ſhall for ever bleſs his Name for them.

8. The more Afflictions here, the more Glory hereafter; 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. *Matth.* 5. 10. For, 1*ſt*, the more *Affliction*, the more *Grace* is exerciſed; and the more *Grace* here, the more *Glory* hereafter: 2*dly*, The more *Afflictions*, the more religious Duties will be performed; *Pſal.* 109. 4. *Iſa.* 26. 16. *Pſal.* 42. 1, 2, 3. Now God will *reward every man according to his works*, though not for them; 1 *Cor.* 15. laſt, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6.

9. Impatience will but lengthen our Affliction; God's time is the beſt for deliverance; Affliction ſhall laſt no longer than need: *Act.* 27. 13, 15. *Pſal.* 23. 1, 2. & 94. 9. *Rom.* 8. 28.

Moreover, that we may bear up as Chriſtians, and not grow weary, and ſo may find that all our *Afflictions* are bleſſed to us, to prepare us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, let us dwell on a few more Conſiderations.

(1.) That theſe our Troubles are all the Hell we ſhall have.

(2.) Think much on the real ſpiritual Advantages we ſhall have by Affliction: Have we not had ſome? bleſs God for them.

(3.) Your choiceſt and chiefeſt Treaſure is ſafe; your *God*, your *Chriſt*, your *Portion*, your *Crown*, your

your *Inheritance* is ſafe; your *Graces*, your *Souls* are ſafe.

(4.) Conſider it is our unmortified Luſt that is the ſting of all our Afflictions; its Sin adds gall to our wormwood: Let us ſet our ſelves in earneſt to the mortifying of our Sins, apply the Blood of Chriſt, beg his Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 13.

(5.) That all our Afflictions come to us through the Covenant of Grace, *Pſal.* 89. 30, *&c.*

(6.) That they do but reach our worſer, our baſer part, our Bodies; 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. our Souls may grow better.

(7.) Labour to live by Faith, and keep it as much in exerciſe as poſſible; for Faith in exerciſe 1*ſt*, ſhews the extreme vanity of all earthly things, for the Soul by Faith ſeeth them as God ſeeth them, to be *all vanity and vexation*, and ſo it overcometh the World; 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. 2*dly*, Faith preſents to the Soul greater, ſweeter, better things in *God* and *Chriſt*, than can poſſibly be found in the Creature: Faith looks and feeds on Inviſibles. 3*dly*, By enabling the Soul to center it ſelf on *God*, and to be ſatisfied with the naked enjoyment of him; God is *All* to the Soul that truſteth in him; *Joh.* 14. 8. *Pſal.* 17. 15. *Phil.* 3. 8, 9.

(8.) Labor every day to be more humble, low and little in your own Eyes. Who am I? I am not worthy of the leaſt of God's Mercies; I have forfeited all; I have improved none; it is Pride only that brings Diſcontent.

(9.) Conſider, the worſt that God doth to his People here, is but to do them good in the latter end; *Hoſ.* 2. 14. *Heb.* 12. 10.

(10.) What God wills is beſt; *God* is Wiſdom it ſelf, and he is Goodneſs it ſelf; when he ſends Sickneſs, Sickneſs is beſt.

(11.) That

(11.) That *God* will be with us in all our Afflictions; that his Ends in afflicting us are all good and gracious; that the beſt way to have our wills, is entirely to ſubmit them to God's Will.

(12.) Think much on the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of Life; Life is not *vita*, but *via ad vitam*: Hold out *Faith* and *Patience*, thy Troubles and thy Life will ſhortly end together.

Let us moſt ſeriouſly and often ſpeak thus to our ſelves; 'I have great Works to do, great Matters to diſpatch, a *God* to be reconciled to, a *Chriſt* to cloſe with, a Soul to ſave, a Race to run, a Crown to win, a Pardon to get, an Hell to eſcape, a Body of Sin to deſtroy, a World to conquer, a Heaven to ſecure, and I have but a little ſhort uncertain time for all this; I have one Foot in the Grave, I am juſt going aſhore on Eternity, what time have I to ſtand poring on my Troubles? Oh! let my whole Soul be taken up with my moſt neceſſary Work; oh, let me engage all the powers of my Soul, and Members of my Body, in ſtudying and labouring to ſecure my eternal Happineſs, how to improve all my Afflictions to the good of my Soul, how to glorifie God in thoſe Fires, how to enjoy Communion with God in every condition, how to live ſo this little ſhort time, that I may dye in Peace, and *enter into my Maſter's Joy*, to be with my deareſt Lord in glory, for ever and ever. Oh! theſe things ſhould take up our Thoughts, and poſſeſs our Minds.

And thus, if we endeavour in the Strength of Chriſt, ſo to manage our Afflictions, ſo to carry our ſelves under them, and ſo to improve them as we have been directed, we ſhall find, by the Bleſſing of our good God and gracious Father in Chriſt, that

that all our light Afflictions, *which are but for a moment*, ſhall *work for us* that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*; to which purpoſe, that Chriſtians may be able to bear up under all their Troubles, the Apoſtle ſubjoins a notable and ſingular help, which himſelf and the *Primitive Chriſtians* had found very uſeful by their own experience, which is expreſſed in the following Verſe.

And ſo much for this 17th *Verſe.*

PART

PART III.

Heaven and *Earth* EPITOMIZ'D: OR, INVISIBILITIES THE Greateſt Realities.

2 COR. iv. 18.

While we look not at thoſe things which are ſeen, but at thoſe things which are not ſeen: for thoſe things which are ſeen are temporal, but thoſe things which are not ſeen are eternal.

WE have ſeen in the former Diſcourſe how bravely the *Apoſtle* and *Primitive Chriſtians* bore up under all their cruel Sufferings, and got advantage by them; as *Ver.* 16, 17. and what means they uſed to attain this holy Courage;

rage; beſides all which, here is another ſingular Help they made uſe of, to get this gracious frame of Spirit, and that is in theſe words, Verſe 18. *we faint not* (they ſay) *but gather ſtrength, and get ground inwardly; while we look not at thoſe things which are ſeen, but at thoſe things which are not ſeen:* So long as we ſhut out viſible things of our Minds, and ſhut our Eyes at them, and ſo long as we apprehend and mind things inviſible, and fix our Eyes on unſeen things; while we do ſo, we faint not under all our Sufferings, but profit by them. Here is looking off, and looking on, a double Act of Faith; a looking off *ſeen things*, things viſible to the Eye of Sence, we look off theſe; and a looking on *things not ſeen*, but inviſible to the Bodily Eye.

Here is a double work, one negative, the other affirmative: For the negative part, obſerve, 1. the Act, if I may properly ſo call it, a looking off, or a looking away from, a withdrawing of their ſight. 2. An Object, things that are ſeen, viſible things, things obvious to bodily ſight. 3. The Reaſon annexed, for they are are *temporal:* All things that are ſeen are *temporal*, things that will laſt but for a time, a ſhort time; they are fading, fleeting things, tranſitory momentany things: Be they good things or evil things, be they proſperous or adverſe, be they ſweet or bitter things, if they be ſeen things, viſible things, they are but *temporal.*

2. A poſitive practice, but we look unto *thoſe things which are not ſeen.* *1ſt*, Here is the Act, *we look*; *Actus Animæ*, it is the Act of the Underſtanding, Will, and Affections, all are ſet and fixed on, and employed about. *2dly*, The Object, *things that are not ſeen*, things inviſible; and the Reaſon is added, for they *are eternal:* And becauſe theſe

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unseen things are eternal, therefore are they most worthy of our most serious thoughts and best affections. And both these Acts, of looking off from visible temporal things, and looking on upon invisible eternal things, have a very great influence in supporting Christians under all their Sufferings in this World; as will manifestly appear in the following Discourse.

1. *First*, What is here negatively expressed: We look not at these things which are seen; the meaning is not, that they did shut their Eyes upon all earthly things, and take no notice at all of them, for that was not their Duty: The Apostle himself laboured with his Hands, and exhorteth all Christians to be *diligent in their Callings*, which they could not be, if they did not look upon the things of this World; but he means this, that their hearts, minds, and affections were weaned and taken off from earthly things; they were not earthly minded; *They minded not the things of the flesh*, *Rom.* 8. 5, 6. that is, wholly and chiefly; yea, not at all in comparison of invisible and eternal things: So our Lord is to be understood, *Joh.* 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which perisheth*: That is, not so much, not so earnestly, as for that which endureth to Eternal Life. *Col.* 3. 2. *Set your affections on things above, not on things below*: that is, comparatively; but let the strongest, steadiest stream of your Affections run Heaven-ward: Let your Affections be *set*, that is, placed, setled, fixed *upon things above*: Not that we should not at all mind things below, but we must not set our Hearts upon them, nor fix and place our Loves and Delights in them. So here, we look not on things that are seen, that is, we place not our Affections on them; visible things

things are not the chief and principal things that we mind; nor do we exercise and spend our most serious and chief thoughts about these visible things, they are not the main study and care of our Souls. *I am* (saith this Apostle) *crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me*, *Gal.* 6. 14.

There are two kinds of visible things, visible good things, and visible evil things, neither of which was the object of their principal thoughts and cares; and they give a good Reason for it, because they are temporal, they are short-liv'd, and but for the present, and therefore we do not much mind them, nor look after them.

1. Visible good things, simply and in themselves good; as,

(1.) Life, Animal Life, one of the best good things in the World, yet very short, and very uncertain, *Job* 14. 1. *James* 4. 14. What is our life? It is but a Vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away; *Psal.* 39. 4, 5.

(2.) The Accommodations of Life, as, Riches, but *uncertain*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Corruptible*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 17, 18. *Deceitful*, *Matth.* 13. 22.

(3.) Pleasures, *they are but for a season*, *Heb.* 11. all lawful Pleasures, such as *Solomon* had, all but *vanity and vexation*; Health and Strength, Friends and Relations, all are but for a time, a very short uncertain time. *Abraham* had his *Sarah*, and *David* his *Jonathan*, and *Jacob* his *Rachel*, but for a time; daily Experience proves all this, all visible good is but temporal.

2. Evil things that are visible are but temporal also. Heaviness endureth but for a moment; Sickness, Pain, Poverty, Disgrace, Persecution, Afflictions are but *for a moment*, Tribulation ten days, an hour of Temptation; Desertion but a little mo-

moment; and because this is the Nature and Property of all visible things, that they are transitory temporal things, not lasting, much less everlasting; therefore we that are enlightned by Grace, and that have true understandings and right apprehensions of these things, and which have also had the experience of their shortness and uncertainty, both of the good and evil things of this World, we do not look unto them, that is, we look beyond them and above them; those visible temporal things do not lye so near our Hearts, nor take up so much room in our Minds, nor so much place in our Affections, as invisible eternal things do, nor as those visible temporal things do in the Hearts and Minds of others, whose Hope and Portion is in this Life, and whose Minds the *God* of this World hath blinded. No, no; we look not upon those earthly things with such an Eye of Love, Desire, and Delight; the visible good things of this World do not raise or delight our Souls, nor seek we that content in them that others do; nor have we such dreadful thoughts of the evil things of this World, as to perplex our selves with the fears of them before they come; nor with immoderate sorrow and grief when they come; nor are we so dejected and troubled, when we part with the visible Comforts of this Life, because we have right Apprehensions of them; and therefore we faint not under our Afflictions.

From hence two Points of Doctrine are observable.

1 Doct. *That because all visible things are Temporal, and of no long continuance, therefore gracious Souls engage not their Hearts too much in them, nor concern themselves too much for them or about them.*

2 Doct.

2 Doct. *That a right and true Judgment of earthly things, will help much to support and uphold the Lord's Servants in and under all the Afflictions of this Life.*

1 *Doct.* 1. *First,* That becaufe all visible things are temporal, but for a fhort time, therefore they muft not be much minded nor regarded. This is the Character and the Duty of all gracious Souls, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30. Becaufe *the time is fhort,* therefore *they that have wives muft be as if they had none, and they that weep as if they wept not,* &c. *Job.* 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which perifheth:* And *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful in nothing,* &c.

Q. *But muft we caft off all care of earthly things, and not mind them at all?*

Anf. Not fo neither; for we are commanded to work, and ufe lawful Callings, and to abide in our Callings; but the meaning is,

1. That we muft not mind and regard visible things, earthly things *Then,* when we are to mind invifible and heavenly things; fee *Ifa.* 58. 13. Upon the holy day of *God,* and when we are in holy Duties, praying, hearing, reading, meditating, then our Hearts, Thoughts, and Minds fhould be wholly taken up with invifible heavenly things, and vifible earthly things laid afide.

2. Nor muft we mind them fo heartily, feriouſly, delightfully, as we muft mind heavenly things; we muft be fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord, *Rom.* 12. 11. and *ſtrive,* as in an Agony, *to enter in at the ſtrait gate,* Luk. 13. 24. and give all diligence to *make your calling and election ſure*; and to *ſerve the*

Lord

Lord with our whole heart, and with all our might: but we are never commanded to mind and pursue the things of the World so, nor with such eagerness and fervency. The Lord chargeth it as a grievous Crime on *Israel*, that they panted after the Dust of the Earth, *Amos* 2. 7. *But gracious souls pant after God*; *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2, 8. *Their souls follow hard after God*: and *blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness*, Matth. 5. Not they that hunger and thirst after the Honours, Pleasures, and Riches of this World. 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *Love not the world, nor the things of the world.*

3. Nor must we mind these visible temporal things firstly, principally, and chiefly, but only secondarily, and in subserviency to heavenly things, *Matth.* 6. 33, 34. *First seek the kingdom of God*; first, in the beginning of your Life; first, in the morning of the day: first, in your Affections.

4. Nor mostly: *God* is to be loved *with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength*, Matth. 22. 37. Psal. 16. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me, as the most worthy object of my continual love, desire, fear, and delight.*

5. Nor must we so mind visible things at all, as to be taken off from minding heavenly things, or to be hindred from, or to be unfitted for minding heavenly things.

6. Nor must we mind them, but with heavenly Hearts, and for heavenly ends, still minding God in them, how to glorifie him by them. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Q. *But when do we mind visible temporal things too much?*

A.

Anſ. 1ſt, When we mind them unſeaſonably, as noted before: 2*dly*, When we mind them inordinately, out of order, that is, firſtly and principally: 3*dly*, When we mind them immoderately. *Let your moderation be known unto all men*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 4.

Q. *But when do we mind them immoderately?*

Anſ. 1. When our minding of theſe viſible temporal things hinders us from minding thoſe inviſible and eternal things. This was the Sin of *Demas*, his embracing this World made him forſake *Paul*: So that when the Service of Chriſt muſt give place to the Service of the World; when the Farm, the Oxen, the Wife, muſt be preferred before the Feaſt, and good Duties laid aſide while the World is ſerved; when the call of *God* is neglected, and the call of the World obeyed; then do we mind Earthly things immoderately.

In ſome caſes, I confeſs, that is in Caſes of Neceſſity, to ſhew Mercy to any in Miſery, to ſave or preſerve Life, God will have mercy, and not ſacrifice; but out of thoſe caſes *God* and his Service muſt be preferred before all viſible temporal things. But when earthly things ſo fill up our Heads, Hearts, Minds, Thoughts, Hands, Time and all, that we have none left to ſpend or beſtow on heavenly things, then we mind viſible things immoderately.

2. When our minding viſible temporal things unfits and indiſpoſeth us for minding inviſible and eternal things; when earthly things have ſo entred our Hearts, and ſo engaged our Minds, that they deaden and dull, clog and cloy our Spirits,

so entangle and perplex our Thoughts, as that thereby we are put out of frame and temper, and made unfit to mind or meddle with Divine and Heavenly things. *Luke* 21. 34. *Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life,* saith our Lord.

3. When we are leſs tired and wearied in the thoughts of viſible temporal things, than in the thoughts of inviſible eternal things: When we can plot, ſtudy, cark, care, think, muſe, ponder upon, freely talk of earthly things, without wearineſs, but with much delight, as being very ſuitable to our Minds, and therefore very pleaſing and grateful to us; we can think and ſpeak of earthly things from morning till night, without wearineſs, but are ſoon weary of the ſtudy and meditation of heavenly things; nay, are meer Strangers to heavenly Meditation and heavenly Diſcourſe; *Mal.* 1. 13. When we are in company where there is heavenly talk, we are ſoon weary of ſuch company, and of ſuch talk, and are willing to break off ſuch Diſcourſe, and to entertain the talk of worldly things.

4. When we are more attentive unto, more intent upon, more ſeriouſly affected with, and more ſtrongly impreſſed by thoſe viſible temporal things, than we are with and by inviſible and eternal things. When good News from Sea or Land, a good Bargain, good ſucceſs in our Worldly buſineſs, doth more heartily affect us and rejoyce us, than good News from Heaven, or any ſpiritual Mercy, then we do immoderately mind earthly things. It was far otherwiſe with holy *David*, *Pſal.* 4. 6, 7. *Many ſay, Who will ſhow us any good?* any viſible temporal good; but, *Lord, lift thou*

the light of thy countenance upon us: Thou hast put more gladness into my heart, than when their corn and wine encreased. And so it is with all gracious Souls.

5. When the gain of visible temporal things brings more joy, and the loss of them breeds more sorrow than the gain or loss of invisible eternal things; when the gain of an Estate, of Honour, of the Favour of a great person, doth more rejoice the Heart than the gain of the Pearl of Price; and the loss of an Estate or Friend doth more cast down than the loss of God, or a good Conscience.

6. When we are more afraid of Suffering than of Sin, and would rather venture the loss of invisible eternal things, than the loss of visible temporal things: Surely it was not thus with the Apostles and Primitive Christians; they looked not on those visible temporal things, they did not mind them unseasonably, inordinately, immoderately; and so, comparatively, they are said to mind them not at all.

The Proof of this Point will appear, I. by express Precept; II. by the Practice of Gospel-Christians; III. by solid Reasons.

I. By express Precepts; besides [illegible] ion'd before, *John* 6. 27. 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. *Phil.* [illegible] that in *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 5. *Set your affections [illegible] things above, and not on things below,* and [illegible] *inordinate affections:* 1 *John* 2. 1[illegible] *world, nor the things of the wo*[illegible] *the love of the father is* [illegible] *him.* [illegible] lay that to Heart, the love of the World is [illegible] inconsistent with the love of [illegible] that in *Jam.* 4. 4. *[illegible] that is* [illegible] *is the Enemy of God,* [illegible] *is enmity to God.* It is a dangerous [illegible] to be the Enemy of

God; nothing is so dangerous: See *Nahum* 1. 2. *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth: the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies.* What a dreadful Text is this! And who are the Lord's Enemies? Why, *those that are the friends of the world*, saith the Spirit of God. Although but few think or believe so, yet so it is; and it is a most dreadful thing to be the Enemies of God, for then God is our Enemy, and that is most dreadful. Now, *he that is a friend to the world, is the enemy of God. World* in that place, I take to be the same that is here in my Text, called *Visible temporal things*, the good things of this World: *Such as are the friends of these things*, saith the Apostle, *are the enemies of God*; and this is no small matter: let us all therefore look well to it, that we be not such.

Q. *But who are the friends of this World?* you will ask.

A. First, All such as love this World, and the things of it, more than God, and Christ, and Heavenly things; this is most clear: So *Matth.* 10. 37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me*, saith our Lord. 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. *Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*

What do most People mind most, and think most upon, and speak most of? Is it not the World, *things that are seen?* What is most in their Thoughts, Mornings soon, and Evenings late? Where are their Hearts and Affections most? Let our Consciences speak: Whom do we serve most, follow and pursue most, God or the World, Christ or the Creature? Who hath the precedency and

supremacy in our Hearts? What Interest is uppermost in our Souls? This is a plain Rule of Tryal; and if we will suffer our own Consciences to speak plainly, and tell us the truth, we may know whether we be Friends of the World or no. Let us deal faithfully with our selves in this great Case, and not flatter and deceive our selves, as most do, and so mistake our selves, by taking our selves to be the Lord's Servants, when indeed we are his real Enemies, because we are Friends of the World; and by this mistake may we ruine our selves for ever.

Secondly, All such as covet, desire, seek after the World, the Profits, and Pleasures, and Favours of it, more than after God and Christ, after Grace and Glory: Such as pant after the Dust of the Earth, that make haste to be rich, that load themselves with yellow Clay, such are Friends of the World: Whereas gracious Souls are like those in *Isa.* 26. 8. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.* So *Psal.* 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* So *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O Lord.* The strongest, steddiest Streams of his Desires and Loves did run after *God* and his Favour.

Thirdly, He that is commanded by the World, is a Friend of the World; one Friend can command another; so all Friends profess to one another, and if they mean not so, they basely dissemble. Can the Profits and Pleasures of the World

command your Hearts, Thoughts, Affections, Time and Strength, yea, and your Consciences too? Can the World keep you from serving God? Can you dispense with the Service of God to attend the World? then sure you are the Friends of it.

Fourthly, Are you more intimate, friendly, and familiar, more pleasant and merry in the company of the People of the World? And in your dealings with the things of the World, are you more delighted and pleased, and are, as it were, more in your Element, and where you would be, than when you are in the company of the Saints, and than when you are dealing with *God* and *Christ*, and *heavenly things*? *David*, who delighted greatly in God, and in his Word, and in his Saints, professed himself to be a Stranger in the Earth; as *Psal.* 119. 19. When the Lord's Servants are in his work, and among his People, then they are in their Element, then they are where they would be: *One day in thy House is better than a thousand*, *Psal.* 84.

Fifthly, He that seeks the Worlds Favours, and fears the Worlds Frowns more than *God*'s, is a Friend of the World. A gracious Soul seeks nothing so much as *God*'s Favour: O, how doth *David* pant after God's Favour, and the light of his Countenance! *In thy favour* (saith he) *is life*, *Psal.* 30. 6. *and thy loving-kindness better than life*, Psal. 63. 3. And how earnestly and frequently doth he pray, that *God* would not hide his Face from him?

Sixthly, He that is troubled more for the loss of those visible temporal things, than for the loss of God, or his Gospel; and complains more for the want and absence of these things, than for the want and absence of God, such, in such a degree, are

are Friends of the World, and being Friends of the World, are Enemies of God.

Seventhly, He that gives the *World* most Respect and best Entertainment: we give our Friends most respect, and best entertainment. How oft hath Christ knock'd at our Doors in the Ministry of the *Word*, and Motions of his *Spirit*, begging our acceptance? How oft hath Christ called to us in Ordinances and Providences for entertainment, and we have shut our Hearts against him? How oft hath the Holy Spirit been striving with us, but we have grieved and quenched him by our Resistance? But how easily have we entertained the Enticements of the *World*? How readily have we embraced the Motions of the *World*? This proves us to be Friends of the *World*; and such are the Enemies of God. By these things let us try our selves, and we may know whether we be the Friends of the *World*, or the Friends of *God*.

II. This Point is proved by *Example*: Take our Apostle as a pregnant Instance; as in the Text, saying, *We look not at those things which are seen*: So in *Gal.* 2. 20. & 6. 14. *I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.* As if he had said, 'I am in the Eye of the *World* as contemptible, despicable, and abominable a thing, as one 'hanged on the Cross, as a Malefactor on the 'Gallows, an Object that Passengers care not to 'look upon, but turn away their sight from: *Such a one am I*, saith this glorified Apostle; for the *World* said of him, Away with such a fellow, he is not worthy to live: *And the world is crucified to me*, saith he. 'I have a low and base thoughts of 'the *World* as the *World* hath of me; the *World* is 'as despicable and contemptible to me, as I am to

'it; I look no more upon the *World* than it 'doth upon me; I do as little value the *World* as 'it doth value me. And this is a full explication of his sence in the Text, *We look not on those things which are seen, for they are temporal.* This is the Character of truly-gracious Souls. So *Gal.* 5. 24. *They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.*

Q. *But how shall we know when we are crucified to the World?*

Anſ. 1: When our care for visible temporal things doth not consume and eat out our care for invisible and eternal things; when our care for our Bodies doth not destroy our care for our Souls; *Deut.* 4. 9. *Only take heed, and keep thy soul diligently:* Our Souls must have our greatest care, and all other cares we must cast on God: *Matth.* 6. 33. *First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added.*

2. When the work of the World is neglected, that the work of *God* may be attended. See this in *Martha's* Case, *Luke* 10. 40, 41. one thing is needful.

3. When, altho' our Hands may be full of visible temporal things, yet our Hearts are not entangled nor over-charged with them, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. *Luke* 21. 34. When our Engagements about visible temporal things do not hinder us from minding our concernments about invisible eternal things, 1 *Tim.* 6. 19. When matters and businesses of the World are made to stand by, and give place to the Service of *God.* When praying times, hearing, reading, meditating times are duly attended and observed. And indeed, we have need work while our

our day laſteth; for there is no work, wiſdom, or device in the Grave, whither we are going: All that is to be done for Eternity, muſt be done in this world, *John* 9. 4.

4. A man is then crucified to the world, and to theſe viſible things, when he is content to be without theſe good things of the world, when the will of the Lord is ſo; Content to be without Friends, Health, Liberty, Wealth, Honours, Pleaſures, *Phil.* 4. 11, 12. Contentment is the Hearts Eaſe; well-pleaſedneſs with our condition, without vexation or diſtraction; to acquieſce in the holy will of God: Godlineſs and Contentment grow both together; if Contentment be little, Godlineſs is not much: if thou be truly godly, then *God*, the All-ſufficient and Chief Good, is thy Portion; and ſo thou haſt enough to content thee, enough to make thee happy for ever. It is a Paradox to the *World*, That a gracious Soul cannot be content with the whole world only, and yet can be content without it. Let us ſeek Content where we will out of *God*, and we ſhall never find it.

5. And laſtly, when a man can patiently bear the loſs of all viſible temporal things, then he is crucified to the world; when Loſſes and Croſſes do not ſink him, and make him faint, as thoſe Saints in this Chapter, *ver.* 16. and thoſe in *Heb.* 10. 34. who took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods. And thus we have the deſcription of a perſon that is crucified to the *World*, and the *World* to him; one that looks not on the things which are ſeen, that ſets not his Heart and Affections upon them.

III. The Reasons of the Point, why gracious Souls do not so much regard and mind visible things are those that follow.

Reason 1. One Reason is in the Text, which is, because they are temporal, fading, perishing, transitory, momentany things; *All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field*: All are dying things, and therefore no suitable Objects for never-dying Souls to spend themselves upon. All our Relations, how dear and near soever, our Health, Estate, Liberty, yea, our Life, is but a Vapour, that appears but a little time, and then vanisheth away; therefore not fit for immortal Souls to fix upon.

Reas. 2. Because these visible temporal things, the outward good things of this World are most times great Enemies to our Souls, and have proved very hurtful and prejudicial to them, that have had the greatest confluence of them, but beneficial to very few, *Deut.* 32. 15. Oh, how few have been the better for Prosperity!

Now this damage and hurt to mens Souls, cometh not from those good things themselves, for they are good in themselves, and are God's Blessings; but this hurt comes partly from the Devil, and partly from mens own Corruptions.

1st, From the Devil, the god of this World, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. who causeth Mischief to the Souls of Men, by the good things of this world, these ways: 1. He misrepresents the things of this world to Men, the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of it, Liberty, Health, Ease, Money, Estates, the Devil shews them in false glasses, and not as the God of Truth

Truth in his Word declares them to be; and indeed so they are, and not otherwise; but Satan represents them not as vain, deceitful, vexatious, and uncertain things, but as brave, glorious, satisfying things; and thence men promise themselves so much Content in them. 2. He lays Snares, Baits, and Temptations in all visible temporal things; 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. There is not any visible Comfort, but there is some Snare, some Temptation attending it. 3. He over-values all temporal things to us, making them to be worth all our Affections, Strength, Time, and Pains, but undervalues Heaven, Grace, and Glory; there he saith, why so much ado? time enough hereafter. 4. He greatens present Evils, as Shame, Poverty, Sickness, Losses, &c. Oh! these must be avoided by any means, but lesseneth eternal Evils, God's Wrath and Vengeance, and eternal Damnation: thus the Devil makes these visible temporal things hurtful to men.

2*dly*, This hurt comes to men through their own Lust and Corruptions within them; without which the Devil could not hurt them; if Men had not the Spirit of this *World* within them, 1 *Cor.* 2. a worldly Spirit, a vain Mind, a foolish Mind, earthly Mind, darkned and corrupted, [illegible] earthly things, which complieth with unto Satan's Temptations with [illegible] their Hearts are carried [illegible] these earthly things, else Satan [illegible]

Now the great Mischiefs which [illegible] do to Mens Souls, through the [illegible] and Mens own Corruptions, [illegible]

First, These Earthly things [illegible] coming to Christ, as they did [illegible] *Matth.* 19. 22. by darkning their

their Minds, that they cannot see that transcendent Beauty and unspeakable Amiableness and Comeliness that is in Jesus Christ; nor their own absolute necessity of him, and their undone estate without him: by filling their Hearts, Heads, Hands, and Time and all, so that there is no room for Christ, nor time to mind Christ; Profits and Pleasures take up all their time, and carry away their Hearts.

Secondly, They hinder men from following Christ, *Phil.* 2. 21. *All seek their own, not the things of Christ*; at least, they hinder men from following Christ fully, and whereso'ever he goes, as *Joshua* and *Caleb* did, and those in the *Revelations*, 14. 4.

Thirdly, They hinder men from owning Christ and his Truths and Saints, and from suffering for Christ when called thereunto; as it hath millions of Professors in time of Persecution.

Now, from the consideration of the danger we are in, from visible temporal things, we have good reason to draw off our Hearts and Affections from them, and not much to mind or regard them.

And indeed, our Souls are in danger on both hands, both from the good and from the evil things of this *World*, Prosperity and Adversity.

1. From Prosperity, we are in danger to have our Hearts divided and estranged from *God*, and so to commit spiritual Idolatry, setting up our Enjoyments for Idols in our Hearts, taking more pleasure and delight in them than in God and his Service: We are in danger of forgetting God, and of falling into sinful security; in danger of being lifted up with Pride and Vain-glory, and thereby provoke God; and in danger of growing careless and negligent in the Service of God: And these are great Evils.

2. From

2. From Adversity there is danger also; as in case of loss of Friends, Estate, Liberty, Health, &c. We are in danger of Impatience, Discontent, Despondency, &c. And therefore gracious Souls labour to get off their Hearts as much as they can from all visible temporal things, and to be as indifferent and as unconcern'd to them as possibly, and to be as dead to them as they can.

3 *Reas.* Because of the Vanity, utter Insufficiency, and Impotency of all earthly things, without God, either to preserve from the least Evil, or to procure the least good. All the Riches in the world cannot cure an aking Tooth; *Haman*'s Honour could not save him from the Gallows, nor *Herod* from the Worms: See *Prov.* 11. 4. *Eccl.* 1. 2. & 5. 10. *Isa.* 55. 2. There is no satisfaction to be had in them or from them.

4 *Reas.* Because there is not the least true happiness in having the greatest abundance of earthly things; for if there were, then Reprobates and Cast-aways should have the greatest share in Happiness, for they have most of those things.

5 *Reas.* Because every gracious Soul is in Covenant with God, united to Christ, partaker of his Spirit, and so made like unto God, and like unto Christ: The Great God is his, and all the great things of the Covenant are his; Christ, and all his Benefits are his; and, alas! what mean, low, base things are all the visible temporal things of this World, in comparison of God, of Christ, and Glory? Besides, all gracious Souls are in measure made like God: And we read what a low esteem God hath of these things, *Luke* 16. 15. *Those things that*

that are highly esteemed amongst men, are an abomination to the Lord. And our Lord Jesus had a very low esteem of them, being contented to be without house or home, or a penny in his Purse: And every true Christian hath the Spirit of Christ in some measure, and the same mind that He had; *Rom.* 8. 9. *Gal.* 4. 6.

6 *Reas.* Because gracious Souls are born of *God*, and that unto far higher and better things than these visible temporal things are at their best, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. They are begotten to *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for them who are kept* (for it) *by the mighty power of God unto salvation.* And they are also bound for God, and for Heaven; they have not their Portion here, nor their Treasure here; they are bound for another Country; they seek a City that hath Foundations, and their Hearts are where their Treasure is: and therefore they do not much mind and regard those visible temporal things.

7 *Reas.* Because they have been so often disappointed and deceived by those things; they never found that in them which they expected from them; the World hath ever proved false to them; they have tryed it, and by Experience have ever found it *Vanity and Vexation*, and nothing else.

8 *Reas.* And Lastly, Because gracious Souls have Principles of Faith in them, they have the same Spirit of Faith in them, that those Primitive Christians had, and that is a *victorious Principle, a World-conquering Faith*, Heb. 11. 1.

By

By Faith the Soul mounts aloft, and takes a prospect of the invisible eternal things, being the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; fixing its Eye upon, and conversing with those things, and so it overlooks, and looks beyond and above all visible temporal things: 1 *John* 5. 4. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* And this I take to be the main thing intended in the Text: As if the Apostle had said, *We look not unto things that are seen*; that is, we live not by sence, but by Faith; as 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. we set not sence on work on visible temporal things, but we set Faith on work on invisible eternal things, and by our Faith on invisibles, we get victory over visible temporal things.

Q. *But how doth Faith help a Soul to take it off from minding and over-much regarding visible temporal things?*

Ans. Faith doth it many ways.

1. First, by carrying the Soul to pitch its Eye upon, and take a view of the invisible God in Christ, and his God in Christ: *Heb.* 11. 26. *Moses* saw him that was invisible, and thereby he endured the evil things of this World, and despised the Riches and Honours of *Pharaoh*'s Court: Alas! how vile and base are all earthly things, in comparison of the Eternal God, the All-sufficient Good? And by Faith the Soul pitcheth it self upon this God, and applieth and appropriateth this God to himself. This God is my God, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. *Psal.* 31. 14. *I said, Thou art my God*; and 48. 14. *This God is our God*; and 73. 26. *My Portion.* Also, by Faith the Soul is carried to pitch upon Jesus Christ, in

in whom dwells all fulneſs, and by Faith ſees his Intereſt in this Bleſſed Jeſus, and thence he is mounted aloft above all viſible temporal things, having his Affections raiſed and fixed upon Jeſus his Saviour, who ſits at the *right hand of God*, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. This ſight of God, and Jeſus by Faith, takes off the Minds and Thoughts of Believers from thoſe things below, having higher, better, and more excellent things above to feed and fill their Thoughts with; for no man can look up to Heaven and look down to the Earth at the ſame time; as, while *Paul* preſſed forward towards the mark, he forgot thoſe things which were behind; and as Jeſus is ſaid to *be in Heaven*, *John* 3. 13. that is, his Heart and Mind was there, when he was on Earth, even ſo it is in ſome meaſure with all true Believers, *their converſation is in Heaven*, *Phil.* 3. 20.

2. Faith receives the Teſtimony which God hath given in his Word concerning thoſe viſible temporal things, that they are all *vanity and vexation of ſpirit*, and therefore judgeth them not worthy of too much place in their Hearts and Minds.

3. Faith raiſeth the Soul to a believing ſight of a better World than this preſent evil World is, and of better things than thoſe viſible temporal things are; of a better Life, an eternal Life; of a better Reſt than can be had here, even an everlaſting Reſt; of a better Inheritance, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. an incorruptible and undefiled one, that fadeth not away; of a better Country than Earth at beſt, even an Heavenly *Jeruſalem*; and of a better Houſe than the beſt Houſe here, even *an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, whoſe Builder and Maker is God; and of a better City, even a City that hath Foundations; and hath in it that better and more enduring Subſtance in Heaven, *Heb.* 10. 34. and

and that infinitely-better Company, the Blessed God, and the Blessed Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, the glorious Angels, and the Spirits of just men made perfect, and better Joys, Delights and Pleasures, than can possibly be enjoyed here, and also far better Employment, and indeed, all better things; and all these better things the Believer by Faith doth realize to his Soul; and all those, so exceeding great and glorious things, the Believer knows he must have, cost what Cost: and therefore the strongest streams of his Thoughts, Cares, Studies, and Pains run this way, and after these things, even after these better things above. Faith looks within the Veil, unto those unseen Excellencies, to those invisible Glories, to be with God, and with Jesus, and to enjoy that full and perfect Communion with them above; and when a Soul is pitcht and fixt by Faith here, setled and centred on things above, then farewel deceitful World.

4. By Faith the Soul apprehends, as the most transcendent Excellency of those things above, so by Faith the Soul sees its absolute necessity of those things: Interest in God, Peace with him, Union with Christ, Title to Eternal Life, *&c.* are things not only infinitely better than all visible temporal things; but, saith the believing Soul, these things I must needs have, I shall be eternally undone without them: It's true, I must have Food and Raiment also, these are necessary too, but not so necessary: If I have God and Christ, I shall not want Food and Raiment, the faithful God hath past his Promise that I shall want no good thing; I may be happy for ever without Riches and Honours, without earthly Friends and Relations, without Health or Liberty, but not without God and Christ,

oh!

oh! there lies my Happiness: One thing is needful, only needful, absolutely needful, and that is, my Interest in God and Christ; and the making sure of that deserves and calls for our most serious and utmost Thoughts and Cares.

If a man were condemned to dye, whereupon would he spend his most serious Thoughts, but upon getting his Pardon, if there were any hopes of it, and not in providing himself fine Clothes, or a full Table? The application is easie.

5. By Faith a Soul is perswaded, that neither the evil things of this World can hinder, nor the good things of this World can further his Happiness, nor his way to it, of themselves: but rather the contrary; for a man may be poor in this *World*, yet rich in Faith, and an Heir of the Kingdom; as, *James* 2. 5. and a man may be rich in this World, yet poor in Soul, and an Heir of Hell, as we see in *Dives*.

6. Faith is a powerful, a victorious, conquering Grace: *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.* *Stephen* was full of Faith and Power, *Acts* 6. 8. *The work of faith with power*, 2 *Thess.* 1. 11.

Faith brings all visible temporal things under the Believer's Feet; it gives the Believer power to use the *World*, and not to abuse it, not seeking Rest and Contentment in it; to use it moderately, without damage and detriment to the Soul; to use it for God's honour, its own spiritual advantage, and the good of others; and power to keep it out of the Heart, Christ dwelling there by Faith; to use the *World*, and not losing our Hearts, our Peace, nor our Consciences in it: Faith gives the Soul power to withstand the Threats and Temptations of the *World*, and power to be willing to leave it, and

to

to go to a better *World*. Oh, the mighty power of Faith! and by the Power of this Faith, gracious Souls are taken off from those visible temporal things.

And so much for the Doctrinal Part.

The Application follows.

First, for Information.

If it be the Character and Duty of gracious Souls, because visible things are temporal, therefore they must not, they do not much mind or regard them.

I. It follows then, that Earthly-mindedness, worldliness is a great Evil, and very unbecoming true Christians, for their *minds and conversations are in Heaven, Phil.* 3. 19, 20. There is the discriminating Character, both of the gracious and ungracious, a vast difference between them, the one mind Earthly things, the other have their *conversation in Heaven*. Most People look on those things which are seen; all seek their own things, those that they count their own; and those are mostly, chiefly, and principally minded, as appears manifestly, thus:

1. By the stream of their Thoughts, which runs fleshly upon visible temporal things, having vain Minds.

2. By the common current of their Discourses, their Talk is all of the *World*.

3. By the tide of their Affections, Love, Joy, Fear, Sorrow, Delight, all run strongly *World-ward*.

4. By the course of their Actions, their Time, Pain, Care, all is spent about the *World*; rising early, going to Bed late, eating the Bread of Care-fulness,

fulneſs, and all about the World. This is a great Evil, becauſe expreſly forbidden, *Mark.* 6. 19. *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures on earth,* Joh. 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which periſheth.* *Col.* 3. 2. *Set your affections upon things above, and not upon things below.* And this Worldly-mindedneſs is contrary to the Practice of true Chriſtians, as in the Text: *We look not on thoſe things which are ſeen:* So *Phil.* 3. 20. And it is the Character of ſuch as are in a ſtate of Nature, and that cannot pleaſe God: *Rom.* 8. 5, 8. *They that are after the fleſh do mind the things of the fleſh:* Such are not crucified to the World, but conquered and captivated by it; yea crucified by it; conquered by the Profits, Honours and Pleaſures of it, and meer Slaves to theſe: and crucified by the Croſſes and Loſſes of the World; their Hearts and Spirits lye under the Feet of theſe, and are at the beck of theſe; their Hopes and Comforts lye all at the Courteſie of the World; and this is a woful Bondage.

Remember this, we can never conclude, that we are truly gracious, until we have Grace enough to keep God and our Hearts together, and to keep the World and our Hearts aſunder. 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *Love not the world, nor the things of the world, for he that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Woe to them that have their Portion in this World, *Pſal.* 17. 14. who have their good things here, who have laid up their Treaſures upon Earth, and there have their Hearts. That Text *Phil.* 3. 19. is enough to terrifie all ſuch; *Their end is deſtruction who mind earthly things.*

Inf. II. It follows from the Premiſes, that Contentment with our Condition, and with any pa-

tion of visible temporal things, is a great Virtue, and well becoming Christians: Discontent proceeds from our over-minding, and over-valuing, and over-loving earthly things; and it is a very great Evil, for it practically denies God's All-sufficiency, his Wisdom, Soveraignty, Faithfulness, and Mercy; it disgraceth the Gospel and Godliness, and is in it self a great Plague.

Q. *But how shall I do to be content, content to be deprived of my dear Relations, Estate, Health, Liberty,* &c?

A. Read Mr. *Burroughs*'s Book of *Christian Contentment*: Take also these Directions.

1. Labour to make God your own, and then you will have a full and sufficient Ballance to all your Losses. He is God All-sufficient. Weigh well those two Scriptures, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. & 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.

2. Labour to make Christ your own; he offers himself to you in the Gospel, with all he is, and with all he hath. And in him dwelleth all fulness, he is all in all: *Psal.* 23. 1. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*, said *David*.

3. Search the Scriptures, and be acquainted with the many exceeding great and precious Promises that are there, suitable to every Condition you can be in. Act your Faith on them, and apply them; lye upon and suck those full Breasts of Consolation.

4. Pray for Contentment, and pray earnestly for the manifestation of God's Love to your Souls, and that will so satisfie and content you, that any measure of earthly things will content you.

5. Be much in Heavenly Meditations, look upon invisible and eternal things, spend serious frequent fixed Thoughts on them.

6. Consider your Deserts: No person in the World, how little soever he hath of the good things of the World, but hath much more than he deserveth, and more than he doth well improve; and how much soever he hath of the evil things of the World, he hath infinitely less than he deserved, for every thing out of Hell is a Mercy: It's of the Lord's Mercy we are not consumed.

7. Consider, if you be true Christians, you have the Spirit of Christ in you, *Rom.* 8. 9. Jesus Christ had a most contented Spirit: Contentment is the inseparable Companion of true Godliness, 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. *Having food and raiment, let us be content.* Let us, that are Christians, who have the Great GOD for our Portion, and Blessed Jesus for our Treasure, and Heaven for our Inheritance, having Food and Raiment, any Food, any Raiment, though never so coarse, let us be content, *content with such things as* we *have*, Heb. 13. 5.

Inf. III. Thirdly, hence it follows also, that great is the Folly of all by Nature, and great is their Blindness; which appears in this, that they value, prize, mind, and follow after visible temporal things, much more eagerly and earnestly than after invisible eternal things: This is but too manifest, *Isa.* 55. 2. *labouring for that which is not bread:* not Bread for their Souls, and for that which cannot satisfie their Souls. God, Christ, Heaven, is not in all, place in any of their Thoughts, *Psal.* 10. 4. & 49. 11. the god of this World blinds Mens Eyes. 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. and the World bewitcheth Mens Minds, and the Deceitfulness

ness of Sin so strangely deludes [illegible] that they become meer Slaves and Captives to [illegible] *World*.

Ask any Man or Woman what things are best, Earth or Heaven, God or the Creature, their Souls or their Bodies, Saving Grace or Worldly Goods? and *all* will confess, that God is best of all, and Heaven better than Earth: If it be so, why then is this *World* minded more than *God*? and, why is *Earth* minded more than *Heaven*? The Apostle tells us the true reason, *Rom.* 8. 5. which is, because Men are in the Flesh, in a State of Nature, under spiritual blindness and darkness: *This their way is their folly*; *Psal.* 49. 12. It is a great Folly to chuse the worst things, and refuse the best; to mind Earth, and forget Heaven; to pursue the Creature, and neglect God and Christ: Folly indeed! to mind day and night, and follow hard after visible temporal things, and neglect eternal. *The pleasures of sin are but for a season, but at God's right hand are pleasures for evermore*: *Psal.* 16. last.

O, the bewitching nature of this *World*! that it should so gain and hold the Affections of Men and Women! that altho *the World* and *the fashion of it passeth away*, and *is but a shadow*, yet that Men *should* so drown themselves in it, as to make them forget the *World* to come. How unreasonable a thing is it, to spend all our Thoughts, Cares, and Pains about *visible temporal things*, seeing they are so transitory and perishing, so much beneath our never-dying Souls, so utterly *unable* to satisfie or content our Souls, or to comfort us in our Troubles, or to stand us in any stead in Death and Judgment? Were not our Minds most strangely blinded, it were impossible that, having Reason and Understanding, we should so waste our Time and Strength in

in purſuit of earthly things, ſeeing the Great God and the Bleſſed Jeſus offer themſelves to become ours; and ſeeing Heaven, and Happineſs, and Glory is before us, and offered to us, and we may have them if we will, and ſo be happy for ever. O wonderful Folly and Blindneſs! the Lord enlighten and convince us.

Inf. IV. Fourthly, it follows, that a true Chriſtian lives by Faith, and not by Sence; for he that is a Captive to the *World*, hath but little Faith, if any; 1 *John* 5. 4. *For faith overcometh the world*; where Sence riſeth, Faith falleth. Now, ſaith the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. *We walk by faith, not by ſenſe.* This is our Practice, and this is the very meaning of the Text: *We look not at thoſe things that are ſeen*; that is, we live not by Senſe, but by Faith.

Q. *But what is it to live or walk by Senſe?*

Anſ. The great good, or end, or happineſs that a carnal Heart propoſeth to it ſelf, in which it expecteth Content, is ſome good that is the object of Senſe, ſomething that may be ſenſibly enjoyed, and this they purſue and labour after. The Rule by which they judge things, is Senſe; what things pleaſe Senſe, and ſeem good to Senſe to the Eye, to the Ear, to the Taſte, to the Appetite, they judge them to be good things; if not pleaſing to the ſenſe, they are counted evil things. That which affects their *Hearts*, is Senſe, Senſible Comforts, or Senſible Croſſes, Senſible Gain, or Senſible Loſs; wanting the light of God's Spirit to open their Underſtandings, they live only by Senſe, and are but Senſual; *Jude* 19. *Eccl.* 11. 9. 22.

and so they walk after the Flesh, and mind the things of the Flesh, chiefly and principally. This Life of Sense is variously expressed, *Prov.* 3. 5. *A leaning to their own understanding*; Psal. 81. 12. *A walking after their own hearts lusts*, and *in their own counsels*; Jer. 9. 14. *Walking after the imaginations of their own hearts*; Isa. 65. 2. *After their own thoughts, in a way that is not good.* Isa. 5. 21.

This is not the way of true Christians; but they walk by Faith, and not by Sense.

Q. *What is it then to walk by Faith?*

Ans. The great Good, or End, or Happiness that a gracious Soul aims at, and seeks content in, is that which is presented to him by Faith, out of the Word of *God*, and that is twofold, to wit, the glorifying of *God*, and the enjoyment of him; these are *things not seen*; these are not the Objects of Sense, but of Faith: To glorifie God in Christ, and to enjoy God in Christ, this is the end of the Saints walk and way; and all this is by Faith.

This *Life of Faith* is demonstrated several ways.

1. He that lives by Faith is guided by the Word of Faith, and that is the whole Gospel, and every Truth in it; such a Soul gives up it self to the conduct of the whole Word of *God*; it walks by no other Rule.

2. It yields it self up to the government of the Spirit of Faith, the *Holy Ghost*; it is obedient to the motions, stirrings, counsels of the Holy Spirit, harkning to that word behind him. *Isa.* 30. 21. not willingly grieving nor quenching it.

3. It walks in the way of Holiness, for this Faith purifies the Heart; *Acts* 15. 9. & 26. 18.

4. It always leans upon Christ, and draws strength from him, to hold on and hold out in the way of Duty; by it the Soul abides in Christ, *John* 15. 3. and by drawing of strength from Christ it can do all things, *Phil.* 4. 13. notwithstanding all opposition.

5. By Faith the Soul commits himself to *God* in *Christ*, in all his ways, and trusts himself and all his concernments with *God*; *Psal.* 37. 3, 5. *Prov.* 16. 3. 2 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Psal.* 112. 7, 8. *Isa.* 26. 2, 3.

Such a Soul can satisfie himself with what he receives by Faith, as really and truly as others can satisfie themselves with Sense; the faithful Promises of *God* are as sweet to him as the sensible Possessions and Enjoyments are of others, *Heb.* 11. 13. they saw the Promises afar off, and embraced them.

Now, when a Soul can depend upon *God* alone for All, in the want of all outward means, and make progress in the ways of *God*, through all difficulties, and not draw back; and doth in his whole course of Life so walk, work, and act, as becomes one that doth believe such glorious things in the other World, as he doth believe; when there is a suitableness in his Life to what he believes; then, oh then, he may truly be said to live by Faith. And this is the Life that in some degree every true Christian lives, and desires to live; and this living by Faith, and not by Sense, is that which is meant in the Text.

2 *Use.* The second Use is of Exhortation to us all, to look off from visible temporal things. Let us labour to get our Hearts crucified, and our Affections mortified to all earthly things; to draw away our Minds as much as possible, from the things

things of this Life. A great part of the Gospel, and of the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, tend to this, to take off our Hearts and Minds from setling and fixing upon earthly things.

I. Some *Motives* to this.
II. Some *Directions*.

I. *Motives*.

1. Consider, it is the expres's Command of *God*, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *Set not your affections on things below*, 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *Matth.* 6. 19. *Lay not up for your selves treasures on earth.* This we should urge on our Hearts.

2. Consider the vanity, emptines's, insufficiency, unsatisfactorines's to the Soul, of all earthly things; *Eccl.* 5. 10.

3. The great inconstancy and uncertainty of them, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Prov.* 23. 5. 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. Riches and Honours go from one man to another, as Birds hop from Tree to Tree.

4. How prejudicial they have been to those that have had the most of them, but beneficial to very few.

5. That these earthly things are all defiling things, like Pitch; and corruptible and corrupting things, being full of Snares and Temptations, are but like Thorns to most.

6. No real Happines's in them, for Reprobates may have them; and they may consist with *God's Wrath*; therefore we should not set our Hearts upon them.

II. *Directions shewing how we may get off our Hearts, and draw off our Minds from them, for our Hearts are so glued to them, we cannot but look on them, and mind them.*

It is not easie work to do, but let us use the means that *God* hath appointed, and try what we can do.

1. *First*, Let us labour to be transformed in the Image of our Minds, renewed in the Spirit of our Minds; *Rom.* 12. 1. *Eph.* 4. 23. New Natures we must get, this must be done; our Old Minds are vain, and altogether suitable to earthly things.

Q. *But how shall we get New Minds?*

A. 1*st*, Pray earnestly to *God*, to give you new Hearts, to repair his Image on you, to create a clean Heart in you, as *David* did, *Psal.* 51. 10. to give you his Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. to sanctifie you throughout, 1 *Thess.* 5. 23. to regenerate you by his Word and Spirit; *Jam.* 1. 17,18. *Tit.* 3. 3,4,5. Oh pray, pray that *God* would cast you into a new Mould, to root out the old corrupt Principles of Nature in you, and to plant new heavenly Principles of the Divine Life and Nature in you, to work a real change in you.

Go to Jesus, beg his Spirit; He was crucified to all *visible temporal things*, beg of him to give you those *Waters of Life*, *Joh.* 4. 14. which he hath promised to them that *hunger and thirst* after them: Beg of him to make you of his mind; labour to put him on by imitation.

2*ly*, Look

2*ly*, Look up to *God*'s Covenant, and lay hold on *God*'s Covenant, *Ezek.* 11. 19. and most earnestly beg the Lord to take you into his Covenant, and to remember his Covenant, and to perform it to you, and wait upon *God* continually: Study the Covenant of Grace, and lay hold on it; for in the Covenant *God* promiseth to become our *God and Portion*; and if once *God* be ours, all the good of Heaven and Earth is ours, and then we shall but little mind *visible temporal things*.

3*ly*, If we would be regenerated, we must search the Scriptures diligently, attend on the Word preached and read, for the Word of *God* is the Seed of Regeneration, the Word of Grace, ordained to work Grace in Souls, *Acts* 26. 18. Look often into the glass of the Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17, 18. and look thorow it unto the glory of the Lord, that shines forth in it; the glory of his Love, and Grace, and Mercy, and Wisdom; and Power, and Holiness, and Righteousness, and Faithfulness; all which are wonderfully displayed in the Face of Jesus Christ, in this glass of the *Gospel*; and by frequent, serious, believing, fixed looking into this glass, and upon the glory of God in Christ therein represented, we shall be changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

4*ly*, Study Jesus Christ much, set him still before you for a Pattern, labour to imitate him, and to be like him, and to walk as he walked: And this is the way to get new Minds.

2 *Direct.* *Secondly*, If we would get off our Hearts from earthly things, let us labour for a clear knowledge and a firm belief of, and familiar acquaintance with *invisible eternal things*; take a

few instances: The Resurrection of the Body, as set out in 1 *Cor.* 15. The second Coming of the Lord Jesus, the manner and ends of it, 2 *Thess.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9. The glorious manifestation of the Sons of *God*, and their full Redemption. That when Christ, who is their Life, shall appear, they shall appear with him *in glory*, *Col.* 3. 3. The Day of Judgment; the separation of the Sheep from the Goats; the final irrevocable Sentence that shall then pass on all Mankind; the Saints passing into Heaven with Christ, their Souls and Bodies united, and their triumphant entrance with the Captain of their Salvation into the Paradise of *God*, to see the Blessed God *face to face*, to live in his presence, *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore*; to live with God in perfect Light, Love, Purity, Rest, and Peace for ever and ever; fully and for ever freed from all Sin and Misery. Oh, these are the things most worthy of *all* our most serious, most fixed, and most constant Meditations.

We should first labour to get those things into our Heads, *fully* and *clearly* to understand them, and should not be contented with a dark confused knowledge of them, but should labour for a distinct knowledge of them; and therefore should earnestly beg the light and assistance of the Holy Spirit, to instruct and teach us, as *Eph.* 1. 18. and look up to *God*'s Promise, which is, that all his People *shall be taught* of him, that we may have a *spiritual knowledge* of them. And then we should labour to draw these *invisible eternal things* down into our *Hearts*, and labour to draw up our *Hearts* to them, for with the *Heart* Man believeth. We should beg of *God* to open our *Hearts* wide to embrace them, to relish, and savour, and be affected

cted with them, and exercise our loves, hopes, desires, delights, hunger and thirst after them, considering also the transcendant Excellencies of those *invisible eternal things*, above *all visible temporal things*; and our own real concernment in them, and likewise their nearness to us, they are not far off; we shall shortly possess that Kingdom promised, and inherit that Glory purchased for us, if we be true Believers; *But a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

Considering also, that all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions have reference to invisible eternal things. If they be good and holy, they have reference to eternal glory; if bad and wicked, they have reference to eternal Misery; for such as is our *Heart* and *Life* here, such shall be our eternal state hereafter.

3 *Direct.* *Thirdly*, Be much in the Meditation of *Heavenly Things*, if we firmly believe, and are fully perswaded, that there are indeed such great and glorious, such excellent things in the other World, as the *God of Truth* assures us of, in the *Word of Truth*; and if we believe, or have good ground to hope, that we have a title to them, and shall shortly enjoy them, why are they not more in our Thoughts? why do we not more meditate on them? Our frequent fixed Meditations on *Heavenly things*, will so sweeten and delight our Souls, and yield such satisfaction to us, as to take off our Minds from *Earthly things*: And to Meditation add Prayer, That *God* would raise and lift up your *Hearts* to mind things above.

4 *Direct.* *Fourthly*, Discourse frequently and feelingly of the vanity and emptiness of *visible*

temporal things, and of the reality and excellency of *invisible eternal things*: If *Heaven* and *Glory* be in your *Hearts*, they will be in your Mouths. Consider also the shortness of the time you have to converse with visible temporal things, 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. and study a crucified Christ more, by that you will come to be *crucified to the World*, and *the World* to you; *Gal.* 6. 14.

5 *Direct. Fifthly*, Consider you that are Christians, are not at home, you are in a strange Country, you are but on your Journey, in your passage to your Father's house, to your long home, and therefore you should not much mind the things of this World.

6 *Direct. Sixthly*, Consider what you lose all the while you are inordinately minding earthly things; you lose not only your precious time, but much inward joy and peace, and much sweet communion with God, which you might have in minding of, and meditating upon *Heavenly things*: *Psal.* 63. 4, 5. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness:* ——— *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.*

7 *Direct. Seventhly*, Let us work a few more serious Considerations into our *Hearts* and *Minds*, to take them from Earthly things.

(1.) That whatever any Man or Woman hath of *visible temporal things*, Death will put a *full end* to them all, and after Death they *all* shall partake of invisible and eternal things. *Matth.* 25. 46. *The* wicked *shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.*

(2.) That

(2.) That every Man and Woman in the World is either made for ever, or undone for ever, as they are related and entituled unto the invisible eternal good things or evil things of the other World; they are made for ever, if related and entituled to the invisible God and Glory; and undone for ever, if not: So that our Eternal Happiness or Misery depends not on our relation or title to visible, but to invisible things.

(3.) Such as is our Title and Estate now, to the one or other, such it will be to all Eternity. *As the tree falls, so it lies: as death leaves us, so will judgment find us.*

(4.) This looking off from earthly things is the way to grow and encrease in Grace, for Worldly Cares do choak, deaden, and weaken Grace, cloying the Affections, entangling and encumbring the Thoughts, much hindring the exercise of Faith and Love, which are the principal Graces whereby holy Souls enjoy Communion with God.

(5.) By this you will have more Communion with *God*; for the less we look downward, the more we shall look upward; and the more we look upward to *God* and *Christ*, in the actings of our Faith and Love, the more will *God* and *Christ* manifest themselves and their love to our Souls.

(6.) This will support us in Affliction, and comfort us in a dying hour; when our Affections are crucified to the World, we shall not be *unwilling* to part with it. *Col.* 3. 3. *We are dead*, saith the Apostle; that is, to the World. And this supported those in this Chapter; they were *crucified to all visible temporal things*, therefore they could easily part with them.

3 *Uſe. Thirdly*, by way of Examination. By this gracious frame of Spirit, we may know our ſpiritual ſtate, whether we be born of *God* or no, whether in *Chriſt* or no; to wit, by this, Whether our Hearts and Minds are more ſet on God, Chriſt, and Heaven, or on the World. *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*; they are ſafe, come Plague, Sword, Fire, Faggot: But who are in Chriſt Jeſus? He tells us, *They that walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.* So Ver. 5, 6. *They that are ſpiritually minded*; *they that have their converſation in Heaven.* Phil. 3. 20. Col. 3. 1, 2. *They are riſen with Chriſt.* So *Pſal.* 73. 25, 26. If we be born from Heaven, we are bound for Heaven: Heavenly-mindedneſs is as good an Evidence for Heaven as any is, and Earthly-mindedneſs is as ill a Character as can be. Let us now try our ſelves by this: Where are our Hearts, and Minds, and Affections moſtly ſet, on Heaven or Earth, on Chriſt or the Creature? Let our Conſciences ſpeak: Surely this one Rule of Tryal will help us to know in what ſtate we are.

Laſtly, For Conſolation to Believers, in reſpect of outward Loſſes and Troubles, that they are *all viſible and temporal things* that we can loſe, and but *temporal things* that we can ſuffer, which are but light and ſhort, as we have ſeen; but our inviſible eternal Mercies, they are *all* ſure, and can never be loſt. If we had enjoyed our earthly Comforts a little longer, it could have been but a little longer, they and we muſt have parted: All viſible things are but temporal; our faireſt Flowers are fading, our ſweeteſt earthly Mercies are periſhing: And here is our Comfort, that if we be in

in Christ, we shall be delivered from *Eternal Death*, from *Everlasting Destruction*, from the *Wrath to come*. If we have our part in the first Resurrection, the Second Death shall have no power on us. Let this comfort us, that the Comforts we lose here are but temporal Comforts, and the Troubles we suffer here, are but temporal Troubles. And this brings us to the second Point observed from the Text, which was,

2 Doct. *That a right and true Judgment of earthly things, will help to support the Lord's Servants under their Afflictions.*

Of which I shall speak but briefly, because much of what hath been said in the former point [illegible] confirm this.

Heb. 10. 34. *They took joyfully the [illegible] their Goods*; And why? *but because [illegible]* in themselves *they had in Heaven [illegible] a more enduring substance.* They [illegible] Judgment both of Earth and [illegible] Earthly and of Heavenly Things, [illegible] infinite worth and value of [illegible] they knew that Heavenly things were [illegible] real, the most substantial, the most [illegible] and that Earthly things were [illegible] ing, and therefore not to [illegible] less to be valued or [illegible] things.

Q. 1. *But how [illegible] of Earthly things?*

A. (1.) We must judge [illegible] only wise, judgeth of [illegible]

judge truly and rightly of them. Now God hath declared in his Word his Judgment of them, *Isa.* 40. 6, 7. *The mouth of the Lord hath spoken this. The voice said, Cry; and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth.* Psal. 39. 5, 6. *Verily, every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity. Surely, every man walketh in a vain shew,* Psal. 103. 14, 15. we are but Dust: *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.* Job 14.1,2. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.* So 1 *Pet.* 1. 24. *Jam.* 1. 10. & 4. 14. *What is our life? It is but even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* This is the Judgment of *God* concerning Man, all Men; They are but *Dust*, but a *Shadow*, but *Grass*, and the Life of Man *very short*, *and full of trouble*, but even as a *bubble*, but a *vapour*; and we may be sure, that the Judgment of God is according to Truth. And then, for all the things of this World, *Solomon*, by the Spirit of God, hath declared what they all are. *Eccles.* 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Vanity and Vexation. Riches, Honours, Pleasures, Relations, Friends, Liberty, all pleasant Accommodations, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit.* This is the true and right Judgment we should have of all earthly things.

(2.) We must judge of these earthly things by the experience of the best and wisest men that ever lived upon Earth; they will *tell* us from their own experience, that they are *all vanity and vexation.* So *Solomon*, *Job*, *David*, *Moses*; Psal. 90. 4, 5, 6.

Yea,

Yea, we all know this by our own Experiences every day, that *all flesh is as grass, and as the flower of the field:* How soon do all our earthly Comforts wither and perish, our dearest and neerest Relations wither and dye away, our Health and Strength, our Life, and all, still withering and perishing? [*See largely of this in Dr.* Reynold's *Three Treatises, the first part, concerning the vanity of the Creature.*]

(3.) Once more judge of Earthly things by the evil use we make of them while we have them, through Satan's Temptations and our own Corruptions, (as was shewed before) and also what cloggs and hinderances they are to our Souls, in our way to Heaven: Altho' Life, and all the Accommodations of Life, as Health, Strength, Liberty, Estate, Friends are good things in themselves, and given us to be helps to Holiness, and to Heaven; yet we must confess to our shame, that all our Earthly Comforts, yea, and our animal Life it self, doth very much, most times, hinder our Communion with *God*, hinder us in the Service of *God*, keep our Hearts at too great a distance from God; and many more Evils they bring upon us; all which considered, we have but little reason so to value them as we do, nor to let our Hearts and Affections so to run out after them. Thus let us take a right judgment of *all* Earthly things. It is true, that so far forth as these Earthly things are useful to us in the Service of God, and further the good of our Souls, so far forth we ought to love and prize them, and praise *God* for them, and pray for the continuance of them; but so far forth as they are hinderances to us in Holiness, and bring Sin and Guilt on our Souls, as too oft they do, so far forth, and in that respect, we had better be without them than with them; their Room would

would be better than their Company: And when they prove Snares to us, and like *Solomon*'s Wives draw away our Hearts from *God*; and like *Dalilah* to *Sampſon*, betray our Souls into the hands of our ſpiritual Enemies; then ſurely it is the goodneſs of *God* to ſeparate them from us, and ſtrip us of them, and we ſhall have cauſe to bleſs God for ſo doing.

Sickneſs and Weakneſs improved, is better for our Souls than Health and Strength abuſed: Reſtraint and Confinement improved, better than Liberty abuſed: Solitarineſs improved, is better than a Family and Company abuſed: Poverty improved, better than Riches abuſed, *&c.* Thus you may get a right Judgment of Earthly things.

Q. 2. *But how will this right Judgment of Earthly things help us to bear our Troubles in this World?*

A. 1. By acting our Faith upon the Word of *God*. Believe, and be fully perſwaded of the truth, which God, the *God of Truth*, hath ſpoken concerning all Earthly things: Believe that *all fleſh is graſs*, that *life is but a vapour*, *&c.* here lies the root of all our Impatience and Diſcontent under our Loſſes and Earthly Comforts, even our Unbelief; we do not *fully* and *firmly* believe they are ſuch vain things that we are deprived of, but *graſs*, but *as the flowers of the field*. Juſt like a man that finds a Box or Bag of Counters, and takes them to be all pure Gold, and greatly rejoyceth in what he hath found; then after a ſhort time he loſeth his Counters, and then he is exceedingly troubled for the loſs of them, becauſe all this while he took them for Gold; but if once he comes to believe, that it was but a Box or Bag of Counters, then he grieves

no more. So it is with us; we believe not, that all our Comforts are *vanity and vexation*; we look not on them to be ſo, but that there is much contentment, and ſweetneſs, and ſatisfaction to be had in them: And therefore we grieve immoderately when we loſe our Counters; but if we did firmly believe they are but Counters, Shadows, Graſs, Vapours, we ſhould not be ſo caſt down.

2. Meditation and Conſideration of the true nature of all Earthly things, as God hath ſhewed us in his Word; often thinking, pondering, and meditating on their vanity, uncertainty, tranſitorineſs and deceitfulneſs: Without this due and ſerious Meditation, a right Judgment of them will do us no good. When God ſmites our Comforts, maketh our faireſt Flowers to wither, blaſteth our flouriſhing Graſs, then let us conſider what God hath ſmitten and blaſted, nothing but graſs, but flowers. What have we loſt? Nothing but Shadows, but Counters: This deep Conſideration will ſupport us under our Loſſes. Conſider alſo the Experience of the Saints, who in *all Ages* have found theſe things to be but *vanity and vexation.*

3. Add Prayer to God, That He will throughly convince your Minds of the vanity of *all earthly things*, as *David* prayed, *Pſal.* 39. 4. That we may judge of them as *God* judgeth of them, and not otherwiſe; and then it will not ſo much trouble us to part with them. So much for a right Judgment of the good things of this World: We muſt alſo labour to get a right Judgment of the evil things of this World, as Poverty, Sickneſs, Impriſonment, Diſgrace, loſs of Friends and Relations; we uſually judge amiſs of theſe alſo, and therefore become impatient.

Now,

Now, that we may have a right Judgment of these things also, we must observe the former Rules.

1. To judge of these Evil things as God in his Word judgeth of them. Now God tells us in his Word, that *Afflictions are short and light*; that is comparatively, as was shewed before; that his ends and designs in all the Afflictions of his People, are good and gracious; of which largely before; that they are Tokens of his Fatherly Love to us, and Evidences of our Sonship; that they are for our spiritual and eternal profit, to take away our Sins, and to make us partakers of his Holiness, and to prepare us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; that they are needful and necessary for us, Afflictions being as necessary to God's People, in their passage to Heaven, as Water is to a Ship, to carry her to her Port.

Now, if we judge of Afflictions thus, as the Only-wise God judgeth of them, we shall bear them with much patience.

2. To judge of them as the wise, good, and holy men of God do judge of them. *Moses* chose rather *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* Holy *David* professeth, That *it was good for him that he was afflicted*, *Psal.* 119. 71. [*Upon which Text I have written at large by it self.*] So the Primitive Christians, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17, 18. and *Heb.* 10. 34. And thousands now in Heaven, and upon Earth, can seal to this Truth, That Afflictions have done them good.

3. Let us judge also by our own Experiences, that as the good things of this World have been, by Satan's Temptations, and our own Corruptions, very hurtful to our Souls; so the evil things of this World have been, through the *Grace of God*,

God, sanctifying them to us, very profitable to our Souls, and we have cause to bless *God* for them.

And as Earthly things, good in themselves, become evil to us, so evil things, so in themselves, but by the Blessing of *God* on them, become good unto us.

Now this right Judgment of the evil things of this World, will much support us under them,

1. If we strongly act our Faith in believing what *God* in his Word hath said of these Evil things, that they *are all but light and short*, that He hath such gracious ends in them; and if we act Faith and Hope upon the many exceeding great and precious Promises in the Word, made to his People in their Afflictions, and relye upon his Faithfulness in them, we shall be sweetly supported under them.

2. If we duly meditate and consider of the good fruits that our Afflictions shall bring forth in us, in due time; and do duly ponder upon the gracious ends of *God* in them, it will, doubtless, mightily uphold us under them.

3. And if we add fervent Prayers to *God*, to give out all those spiritual Blessings of Afflictions to us; and wait on him for the blessing, hoping, desiring, and panting after these Blessings; we *shall* be enabled to bear up under them *all*.

Application.

Let us bewail our wrong and false Judgment of Earthly things, both of the good and evil things of this World, and pray earnestly for a true, spiritual, and right Judgment of them; let us *fully* submit our Judgments to the Judgment of *God*, and settledly

ly

ly acquiesce in *God*'s Judgment; let us pray earneſtly for a ſpiritual Underſtanding, and a renewed Judgment; let us look on *all viſible temporal things* as God looketh on them, and ſettle it in our minds That the Judgment of God is right and beſt; and let us not lean to our own Underſtandings, and by this means we ſhall be much *helped* to bear *all* our Afflictions with Comfort and Patience.

So much of this Doctrine.

Now to proceed to the laſt words in this Verſe:

2 COR. iv. 18.

But to the things which are not ſeen, for they are eternal.

THIS is another Act of Faith: Faith enables the Soul not only to *look* off from things which are ſeen, for they are *temporal*; but alſo to *look unto thoſe things which are not ſeen, for they are eternal.* *We look*; the original word is σκοπέω, *proſpicio*, to look ſeriouſly, diligently, earneſtly, to look upon a thing as his mark and ſcope, to look with ardent deſire to attain that which he looks for. Now ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *We look not on thoſe things which are ſeen, temporal things*, as our mark and ſcope, with ſuch eagerneſs and diligence to attain them; we ſee not ſuch *worth* and *excellency* in them, as to ſpend our beſt Thoughts about them, and our ardent Affections upon them; no, no, but we look on *things not ſeen*; we look on unſeen things

infinitely more worthy, and more highly meriting our best Thoughts and Affections; for those unseen things are eternal things, and therefore more worthy of our Affections.

Two Points of *Doctrine* arise hence.

Doct. I. *That truly-gracious Souls do most seriously mind, and most diligently intend and aim at unseen eternal things; upon these their thoughts are mainly and mostly fixt, and about these their greatest Care and Study is employed.*

Doct. II. *That the due minding of, and meditating upon unseen eternal things, will much help to support the People of God under all their Sufferings in this World.*

Doct. I. First, *That truly-gracious Souls do most seriously mind, and most diligently intend and aim at unseen and eternal things.*

Here we must enquire,

1. What those invisible eternal things are.
2. The Reasons of the Point.

1. What they are. They are things not seen, and they are eternal; unseen to the bodily Eye; opposed to the visible things of the World, Riches, Honours, Pleasures, Friends, Health, Liberty, &c. these good and evil things of this World; these we look not unto, but to invisible, and they are,

1. *First*, The Invisible *God*, whom no man hath seen, nor can see with bodily Eyes; *Coll.* 1. 15. *1 Tim.* 1. 17. *Moses* saw him that is invisible. *Heb.* 11. 27. *We*, saith the Apostle, *look unto him*, *Mic.* 7. 7. *I will look unto the Lord*, *Psal.* 34. 5. Gracious Souls make *God* their aim, and their end, how to serve

ſerve, and pleaſe, and glorifie him, and how to have Communion with him, and to enjoy him. This is the chief Study, Care, and Labour of gracious Souls, to be accepted with *God*, and to bring *Glory* to him, 2 *Cor.* 5. 9. We are always looking to *God*, to his Precepts, to obey them, to his Promiſes to believe and reſt upon them; to his Providences, to obſerve and comply with them, anſwering them by ſuitable Duty.

2. *Secondly*, We look unto our Bleſſed Jeſus, the Image of the Inviſible *God*, the eternal Son of *God*; He was once viſible, and ſeen in the Fleſh, and ſhall be ſo again at his *ſecond coming*, *Acts* 1. But now we ſee him not, yet now we believe in him, and look on him by Faith: And that we may look upon and behold this unſeen Jeſus, and by Faith and Love, to enjoy Union and Communion with him, to know him living in us, and to have fellowſhip with him in his Death and Reſurrection, and in his Life, to receive of his fulneſs *Grace* for *Grace*: This the Saints aim at, and ſpend their Thoughts and Cares about, and make this the main and principal work of their Lives; *Phil.* 3. 8, 9, 10. That they may be joyned to Chriſt, married to him, engrafted into him, partake of his Spirit, Life, and Grace; that they may be conformable to him, and enabled to walk as he walked; that he may ſup with them, and they with him; that he may dwell in their Hearts by Faith, and take up his abode with them, and manifeſt his Love unto them; that they may grow up in all things like unto him. Theſe are the Aims, Intentions, Deſires, Prayers, Longings, and conſtant Endeavours of truly-gracious Souls. Not to be rich, and great, and honourable in the World, but to partake of the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt,

to

get and possess Jesus, this Pearl of greatest
e, to be *rich in Faith*, to have a clear Title to
Crown of Life, which Jesus hath purchased
promised; to live in Christ, and to please, ho-
r, and enjoy Jesus. This is their Chief La-
r.

3. The holy Spirit is *invisible and eternal*; the
cious Influences and Operations of the Holy
ost on the Hearts and Spirits, (though the
fts may in some sense be said to be visible,
of eternal efficacy) yet the Operations are in
e sence invisible; the Graces of the Spirit,
ich I take to be those Waters of Life, which our
rd speaks of, *John* 4. which spring up to Eter-
l Life; the Joy, the Comforts of the Spirit, the
intings, teachings, guidings of the Spirit; the
nes and sealings of the Spirit; all these are in-
ible and eternal things; and these are the things
at natural men cannot know nor discern, 1 *Cor.* 2.
, 13, 14. Strangers intermeddle not with this
y, because Strangers to it: It is hidden *Manna*:
t these are the unseen things, that gracious
uls mind, seek, and breath after, and always
ng for: Oh, that they may be filled with the
irit, filled with the Graces and Comforts of the
irit, and enjoy Communion with the Spirit.

4. The Word of *God*, the glorious Gospel, that
invisible and eternal, not in the Letter of it, for
at is to be seen in the Book, but the Mysteries of
are hidden Mysteries; *Matth.* 11. 25. These
ings are hid from the wise and prudent of the
World. It's true, the sound of the Gospel is gone
t abroad throughout the World; but the power
d efficacy, the vertue and inward workings of
, the sweetness of it, that is invisible to the Eye
the Body, and hidden to the World, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10.

God

God reveals those things to his People by his Spirit: The infinite Beauty of Christ, his transcendent Excellencies, the Beauty of Holiness, the surpassing sweetness of the Promises, the glory of Heaven, with many, many other unspeakable Excellencies, which are held out in the Gospel; all which bodily Eyes cannot see, nor carnal Hearts understand.

The powerful enlightning, quickning, transforming, nourishing, strengthning, refreshing, and comforting power and vertue of the Gospel, but very few see and feel; none but such as are spiritualized, and whose Understandings are savingly enlightned; *Eph.* 1. 17, 18, 19. There are great and glorious things represented in the Gospel; but Men's Understandings must be enlightned before they can see them: Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel; *Heaven* and *Hell* opened in the Gospel, but not to be seen by the bodily Eye. Hence the *Gospel* is said to be hid, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. and this word abideth for ever, 1 *Pet.* 1. 25. and it is an everlasting Gospel. *Now*, saith the Apostle, *we look to the Word of God, and mind the glorious Mysteries of the Gospel, and feel the sweet and powerful effects of it; we desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby; we esteem the Word of God above our necessary food*; Job 23. 12, 13. and *it is sweeter to us than the hony or hony-comb*, *Psal.* 19. 9.

5. We look unto, and mind all the exceeding great and precious Promises which are in the Word of God; the vertue, sweetness, and good of them are all invisible to *carnal* Eyes. Tell a *carnal* man of the goodness and sweetness of the Promises, it is a Riddle to him; give him present Enjoyments, he never tasted any sweetness in them;

them; but true Christians look on them as exceeding rich things, and look up to them, and embrace them, and live upon them; they could not live without them: The Promises are dry Breasts to carnal Hearts, they can draw no nourishment from them; but they are full Breasts to gracious Souls: Psal. 27. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed,* (that is in the Promises) *to see the goodness of God in the land of the living.*

The Promises, That God will be our God in Christ, and our Portion, and exceeding great Reward, *Gen.* 17. 1. That He will be a Sun and a Shield to us, give us Grace and Glory, and will withhold no good thing from us; *Psal.* 84. last. Promises of Pardon, of Peace, of Holiness and Righteousness, of Rest for our Souls, *Mat.* 11. 28, 29. Promises of his good Presence with us in all our Troubles; of Supports, Supplies, and of a gracious Issue out of all; gracious Souls trade in the Promises, converse with the Promises; these they mind and rest upon, and find Sweetness and Comfort in.

6. And Lastly, We look unto all those great and glorious things which the Great *God* hath prepared for us from the foundation of the World, and which our most dear Lord Jesus hath purchased for us by his most precious Blood. Oh, the great and glorious things which *God* our Father hath prepared for us! that blessed Vision of *God*, that Kingdom of Heaven, that Life eternal, that Crown of Glory, of Life, of Righteousness, that Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; that everlasting Rest; all these things are invisible and eternal; *And unto these unseen and eternal things, we,* saith the Apostle, *look, and set our mind upon.* And also the great and glo-

glorious things which our Lord hath purchased; as Peace with God, his Favour, Acceptance with him, Adoption, Sonship, Heirship, Remission of Sins, an heavenly Inheritance; these are all invisible and eternal things, great and wonderful things, things of the greatest excellency and highest concernment; *And*, saith the Apostle, *we that are Gospel-christians, we look to these things; upon these we spend our most serious thoughts, and our best affections; these possess our hearts and minds, and we live in the continual prospect of these unseen and eternal things.*

Before I come to the Reasons of the Point, a little more to open this Act of gracious Souls, and the Object of it.

I. For the Act, *Looking*; which may note these things.

1. It notes Reality, it is no Fancy, Dream, or empty Imagination, but we look, we see, we behold them; the Eyes of our Understandings being enlightned, and our Minds illuminated by the Spirit of God; and having the Spirit of Faith in us, we discern and behold those invisible and eternal things: *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* We do as fully believe them, as if they were visible to our Bodily Eyes.

2. It notes Certainty; what we see with our Eyes, we are certain of; we are fully perswaded of them, *Heb.* 11. 13. hence this Sight is called Knowledge, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1.

3. Fixedness; it is not glancing, or casting an Eye on them, but we look on them, that is, fixedly and stedfastly; we aim at them; we look

on them as our Mark and End. Thus for the Act.

II. For the Object; they are things that are not seen: What they are, hath been showed; the Properties are these:

1. They are spiritual things; so in their Nature, and revealed by the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. and they are spiritually discerned, and not otherwise.

2. They are all high, great, and glorious things; yea, the highest, the greatest, and the most glorious things: All other things are but Dross and Dung in comparison of them.

3. They are the choicest and the best things, most worthy of our Hearts and Minds, and of our choicest Affections: What is the Chaff to the Wheat? What is the Dross to the Gold? What is Earth to Heaven, or the Creature to God?

4. They are Heart-transforming, Heart-gladding, Heart-elevating, Heart-strengthning things, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17, 18. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. These things looked unto by the *Eye of Faith*, will change the Heart, and cause *joy unspeakable and glorious.*

5. They are real, solid, substantial things, not Shadows, as visible temporal things are; *Hebr.* 10. 34. They *joyfully took the spoiling of* their *goods*, for they were but Shadows, Trifles; *because* they had *in Heaven substantial things.* The things of this World are all vain, lying Vanities, things that are not; *Prov.* 23. 5.

6. They are Soul-satisfying, and Heart-contenting things; such as have them shall never *thirst* more, *John* 4. 14. that is, inordinately and immoderately after Earthly things.

7. And Laſtly, They are eternal things, permanent, abiding, laſting, everlaſting things; eternal Life, eternal Glory; everlaſting Conſolation, everlaſting Reſt: We ſhall ever be with the Lord.

" O my Soul! Can I be a true Chriſtian, and " be a Stranger to this Practice of converſing with " thoſe inviſible eternal things? Can I be re- " generate, born of *God*, born from above, and " be a Stranger to this Practice? Can I be quiet " in Conſcience, ſo long as I live in the neglect " of this? Can I groundedly hope to live and " converſe with *God* and *Chriſt* for ever hereaf- " ter, and be ſuch a Stranger to this converſe with " him here? Can I have any Support in Trouble " without this? Can I have any true Comfort " in Life or Death, or bid Sickneſs or Death " welcome, and be a Stranger to this? Certain- " ly no: Therefore, O my Soul, labour for more " familiar Acquaintance with thoſe inviſible eter- " nal things, and exerciſe thy ſelf more in the " Meditations of them.

The Grounds and Reaſons of the Point, Why gracious Souls do moſt ſeriouſly mind, intend and aim at inviſible eternal things.

Reaſ. I. Becauſe they are commanded ſo to do, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *Set your affections upon things above, not on things below*, Mat. 6. 19, 20. *Lay up for your ſelves treaſures in Heaven, not in Earth*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 19.

II. Be-

II. Because truly-gracious Souls are endued with invisible, divine, and eternal Principles, which do encline, dispose, and suit them to those *invisible and eternal things*: *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. They are begotten of God, born of God; their extraction is heavenly; 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. They must needs mind God, for they are begotten of him, He is their Father, they have his Image on them; and they must needs mind Christ, for he is formed in them; and the Spirit, for they are born of the Spirit: Heaven is their Father's House, their own Home, their Inheritance; the Principles of the Divine Nature enclines and disposeth them to mind things above. As *they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, so they that are after the spirit, do mind the things of the spirit*; for this is the characteristical difference between the *carnal* and the *spiritual man*, *Rom.* 8. 5,6. 1 *John* 5. 4. Every thing acts according to its Principles. If Men and Women have no other Principles in them, but such as they brought into the World with them, which are only earthly, and have no other Spirit than the Spirit of the World in them; they cannot mind heavenly things, for such as is the earthly, such are they that are earthly; Heavenly things are contrary to their Natures, and to their Principles, and therefore they cannot mind them. But holy Souls have Principles of the Divine Life, and they live the Life of God.

III. Because their Hopes are set, grounded, fixed on those invisible eternal things; their hopes are not in this Life, but in God, in Christ; Glory, Heaven, and Eternal Life, are the Objects of the hopes of all truly-gracious Souls; 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *Rom.* 5. 2. *Heb.* 6. 18, 19. *Tit.* 2. 13.

Tit. 1. 2. 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. 1 *John* 3. 3. We must needs mind them, and set our Affections upon them, because we hope to enjoy them for ever. *Phil.* 3. 20, 21.

IV. Because the People of God have had experience in some measure of the sweet and powerful Influences and Operations of those invisible eternal things on their own Hearts and Spirits; they have tasted that the Lord is gracious; they have had fellowship with the Father and the Son, in some degree; they have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, in many saving fruits and effects on them; they have felt the power, efficacy, and comfort of the Word and Promises; and they have in some measure received the *first-fruits* and *earnest* of their *Inheritance*; *Rom.* 8. 23. *Eph.* 1. 13, 14.

V. Because by all these things gracious Souls live, and in all these things is the Life of their Souls: Their Life is hid with Christ in God, and should they not mind God and Christ? Christ liveth in them, and they in him, *Gal.* 2. 20. They live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, *Gal.* 5. They live by, and live upon the Promises, *Jos* 23. 12. They live by Faith, in the purchased, promised, prepared Inheritance; they live in hope of *Eternal Life*, *Tit.* 1. 2. and *rejoyce in hope of glory*, *Rom.* 5. 2. They live in hope of a better Resurrection; they groan after their House in Heaven; they seek a Country, an heavenly; and therefore they cannot but mind and intend, look unto, and aim at those invisible eternal things. Our natural Life, much less our spiritual Life, doth not consist in the things which we possess; that is, in visible temporal things; for, *in* God *we live, move, and have our being.*

VI. It

VI. Because these invisible eternal things are the only things that are suitable and satisfying to the Souls of gracious persons; Earthly things are not suitable to Heaven-born Souls; Riches, Honours, Pleasures, not suitable, nor satisfying to immortal Souls, which are begotten of God: Earthly things are no Bread for Souls; *Isa.* 55. 2, 3, 4. *John* 6. 27. They are all but Ashes, but Wind, Husks, Chaff, not Food for Souls; these are suitable to the Body, Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats; but God, and Christ, and the Word, &c. for the Soul, for the renewed gracious Soul; other things will not content it.

VII. Because these invisible eternal things are the best, the choicest, the chiefest, the most excellent things, the principal things, as *all* will confess, and therefore most worthy to be minded and looked after; *Phil.* 4. 8. GOD and Glory, Heaven and Happiness, are the best things for certain, *Heb.* 10. 34. & 11. 16. The Saints Happiness lies in those invisible eternal things: They may be happy without visible temporal things, but they can never be happy without the other: And indeed, all visible temporal things are not worth minding at all in comparison of the other. Oh, that we could believe this, and act accordingly.

VIII. Because those things are most sure and certain, *incorruptible and undefiled*, and *that fade not away*, *Matth.* 6. 19. *nor moth, nor rust, nor thieves* can *spoil* us of these; 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. *Heb.* 11. 9, 10. & 13. 14. 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. *Psal.* 48. 14. *This God will be our God for ever.* None can say so of Relations or Possessions, of Health, Wealth, or Liberty. Jesus Christ is the Believer's for ever; their Joy is everlasting, none can take it from them; their Peace is everlasting, their Kingdom everlasting.

IX. Because by minding of, and by setting their Affections upon those invisible eternal things, they are much freed and discharged from the Snares, Fears, Cares, Sorrows, Entanglements, Incumbrances and Temptations, that accompany the minding of those visible temporal things. *Nil sentit in Nervo, cum Anima sit in Cœlo.*

Oh, the intolerable Burthens, the unavoidable Snares, Cares, and Fears that attend these earthly things! how are the Minds of Men rack'd, tortured, distracted, distempered, macerated with these? while they mind them eagerly and inordinately, What cross Passages fall out? what Disappointments do they meet with? how strangely are mens Minds bewitched with these things? what unruly Passions are oftentimes stirred up, and thence they break out into many uncomely words and actions, piercing themselves thorow with many Sorrows, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. Against this our Lord caution'd his Disciples, *Luk.* 21. 34. *Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life.* And by these worldly entanglements many times God is forgotten, Conscience wounded, Peace broken, Guilt contracted, Duty neglected, and Sorrows multiplied.

But now, when we can get off our Hearts from Earthly things, and can get them up above these things, and can fix our Minds upon those high and heavenly things; how are our Spirits discharged and disburthened, and our Minds eased and quieted: *Psal.* 63. 5, 6. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.*

O, the

O, the ſweet Peace and Tranquility of Mind that thoſe enjoy, that *look above*, and *live above*, and have their *converſation in Heaven*; who walk with God, and talk with God, and conſtantly converſe with things above: *To be ſpiritually minded is life and peace*, Rom. 8. 6.

X. Becauſe by this minding Heavenly things the Saints get good Proof and Evidence of their Title unto, and of their Intereſt in God and Chriſt, and to thoſe *inviſible eternal things*; 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3. *Joh.* 3. 6. 1 *Cor.* 15. 48. This is a good Proof that we belong to God and Heaven, becauſe we mind them, and ſet our Hearts upon them.

XI. Becauſe by the minding of thoſe things above, the People of God are wonderfully ſupported under all their Troubles in this Life; and by their Heavenly-mindedneſs their Troubles are alleviated and ſweetned to them; as in the Text and Context: *We faint not, while we look not at thoſe things which are ſeen, for they are temporal; but at thoſe things which are not ſeen, for they are eternal.* By our looking off from *temporal things*, and by our looking on upon *eternal things*, we are ſupported under all our Sufferings.

XII. And Laſtly, Becauſe this is the way to ſalvation: For if *the end of thoſe who mind earthly things* be *Deſtruction*, as *Phil.* 3. 19. then the end of thoſe who mind *Heavenly things*, muſt be *Salvation.*

Thus much for the grounds of the Point.

Q. *But wherein conſiſts this Duty of* looking *unto inviſible eternal things? What is this* minding *of them? And how muſt this Work be managed?*

Anſ. 1. It conſiſts in the diſtinct knowing, and right underſtanding of thoſe *inviſible eternal things*; to know God and Chriſt, the Myſtery of *God* and *Godlineſs*, *Col.* 2. 3. *Epheſ.* 1. 17, 18. Let us pray as the Apoſtle doth there; *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory*, would *give unto us the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him*: That *the eyes of our underſtandings may be enlightned*, &c.

2. In a full perſwaſion of Heart, of the Reality and tranſcendent Excellency of thoſe inviſible eternal things, that they are indeed the moſt real, the moſt ſubſtantial, and the moſt excellent things, infinitely ſurpaſſing all temporal things; *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. *Pſal.* 73. 25. If we believe not this, and be not fully perſwaded of this, that Heavenly things are incomparably better than Earthly things, we ſhall never ſet our Hearts upon them.

3. In the frequent and lively Actings of Faith, Love, Deſire, Hope, Hungrings, Thirſtings, Pantings, Breathings, Longings and Expectations upon and after thoſe Heavenly things; *Pſal.* 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2, 3, 8. *Iſa.* 26. 9. Oh, that I had a clearer, fuller ſight of *God*, more acquaintance with my Bleſſed Jeſus, more ſpiritual reliſh of Divine things, more experience of the ſaving workings of the Holy Spirit, more ſenſe of the fatherly love of God in Chriſt: Oh, that I had clearer Evidences of my title to Everlaſting Reſt: Oh, that the Love of God may be ſhed abroad on my Heart abundantly: Oh, that I could taſte more ſweetneſs, and feel more Power in the Word and Promiſes: Oh, that I could converſe more with God, and have my Converſation more above. Thus holy Souls pant and breath after God and Heavenly things.

4. In

4. In eſteeming, prizing, valuing thoſe inviſible eternal things above all earthly temporal things; *Pſal.* 30. *In God's favour is life*; *Pſal.* 63. 3. *His loving-kindneſs is better than life*; *Pſal.* 4. 6. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* This will put *gladneſs into our hearts, more than the encreaſe of corn and wine.*

5. In applying and appropriating theſe inviſible eternal things to our own Souls; *My Lord, and my God, my Jeſus*; *The kingdom prepared for me, the crown belongs to me.*

6. In frequent converſing with them by meditation, contemplation, conſideration; ſpreading and ſpending our moſt ſerious Thoughts, and our moſt fixed and deepeſt Cogitations on them, and never leave thinking and thinking, pondering, muſing, ruminating and dwelling on them, until our Hearts be warmed, and our Affections kindled, our Deſires enlarged, and our Delights raiſed. *Pſal.* 37. 5. *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord.* *Pſal.* 104. 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* Alas, we have ſo few, and ſuch ſhort, and inconſtant, and unfixed Thoughts of God and Chriſt, of Heaven and Glory, that our Hearts are not affected, nor raiſed and enflamed.

7. And laſtly, In a converſation ſuitable to thoſe inviſible eternal things: *Phil.* 3. 20. the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians had their *Converſations in Heaven.* This alone is true, real minding of, and converſing with thoſe Heavenly things, when we live the life of God, live like God, like Jeſus, walk in the Spirit, to be *holy in all manner of converſation*; 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. To be like Chriſt in Meekneſs and Humility; *Matth.* 11. 28. and in Purity; 1 *John* 3. 3. in contempt of the World, and Vanities of it; in Heavenly-mindedneſs.

And thus we ought to look unto and mind invisible and eternal things, and this will bring *true Joy* and *perfect Peace*. *Isa.* 26. 3. *Psal.* 112. 6, 7.

Moreover, I conceive, that the Apostle and Primitive Christians did look also unto the *invisible eternal Evil things*, and spent some Thoughts upon them; as, *The Terrour of the Lord*, *Everlasting Destruction*, *Eternal Death*, *the Wrath to come*, &c. These things they minded two ways.

1. By way of Praise and Thanksgiving, admiring the Love and Grace of God in Christ, by which they were delivered from those invisible eternal Miseries, which their Sins had deserved; as we find often in their Praises.

2. In their Diligence to escape those eternal Evils, labouring for the assurance of their full deliverance from them; constantly exhorting all men to *give all Diligence*, that they might not fall short of their Everlasting Rest.

But principally, I think, they looked unto those *invisible eternal Good things*, to secure their Title to them, and Interest in them; and so minding them, as still to press forward towards the Mark of the Price of the high Calling; and with the forethoughts and fore-sights of them, did support their Spirits under their Troubles, and sweeten their passage through this present evil World.

So much for the Doctrinal part.

The

The Application.

First, *For Information.*

1 *Inference.* Hence appears the extream Folly and Madness of People by Nature, who look at, mind and aim only at visible temporal things, but totally neglect Invisible eternal things. God, Christ, Heaven, is not in all, scarce in any of their Thoughts; *Lovers of* themselves, of their own things, of Profits and *Pleasures*, more than of God, *Phil.* 1. 21. 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. that make themselves the Mark they aim at; but the Glory and Honour of God, the pleasing and enjoying him, are strange things to them, things they never minded, never thought on: God complains of this against the Jews, *Hos.* 8. 12. *I have written to them the great things of my Law, but they counted them as strange things.* So may Jesus Christ justly complain of Men under the Gospel; "I have revealed the great and glorious Mysteries of the Kingdom of "Heaven, the Mysteries of Salvation, the un-"searchable Riches of the Grace and Love of "*God* in the Gospel. Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel; the true and only way to Heaven and Eternal Life, to Everlasting Happiness, is clearly made known in the Gospel; the only Means to get an Interest in the great God, in Jesus Christ, in the New Covenant; how to get Pardon of Sin, Peace with God; how to be justified, saved, and glorified for ever; *All these things* are *fully* and *clearly* revealed in the Gospel. The invisible eternal things of the World to come, which are the greatest Realities and

and Excellencies, the choiceſt, greateſt, and beſt things. But woe, and alas! how little are thoſe things minded? It is *Corn*, *Wine*, and *Oyl*; Who will ſhew us any good, any viſible temporal good?

Now, is not this extream Folly and Madneſs, for reaſonable Creatures, made for God, made capable of enjoying God, and all thoſe inviſible eternal good things; for them thus to labour and pant after the Duſt of the Earth, to ſpend their Thoughts, Minds, and Strengths upon that which cannot ſatisfie, which will not endure; but thus to waſte precious Time, and Breath, and Spirits for periſhing fading things, and neglect inviſible eternal things; the incorruptible Crown, that *fadeth not away*, the undefiled Inheritance, the everlaſting Kingdom, eternal Life and Salvation; not to look on thoſe, nor mind them, nor labour for them: Yet this is the common neglect of the World. It is amazing Madneſs, aſtoniſhing Folly. Thus God expreſſeth, *Jer.* 2. 11, 12, 13. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this; be ye horribly afraid; be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord: For my people have committed two evils; they have forſaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns, that can hold no water.* *Prov.* 1. 20, 21, 22. Yet ſuch is the Madneſs of *all* by Nature, and it is greatly to be lamented.

This ſhews alſo the blindneſs and darkneſs of Men by Nature, that they cannot ſee the excellency of thoſe inviſible eternal things, nor their own abſolute neceſſity of them, and concernment in them: The God of this World hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine into them: This glorious light

ſhines

shines upon them, and shines into many of their Heads; this Light they cannot resist; but it shines not into their Hearts, to transform and change them, as it doth into the Hearts of God's Elect; and it's greatly to be lamented; 2 *Cor.* 4. 4.

2 *Inf.* Secondly, Hence appears the beguiling, bewitching nature of the World, that it should so strangely win and gain the Hearts and Affections of Men and Women, and so easily prevail with them, while God and Christ are offered to them, and are not embraced: Heaven gates are opened to them, and they invited, entreated, perswaded by Promises, by Threatnings, commanded to come and enter, but they will not; they make light of it; no Perswasions will prevail; they turn the deaf Ear to all: But for the World, how soon are People perswaded to embrace it, to follow hard after it, to count no Time nor Pains too much to attain it?

What is there in those visible temporal things, in those glittering vanities, that should so allure, entice, and seduce rational Souls, and such as profess that they believe all those better things? But indeed, they do not believe them, whatever they profess: Infidelity is the Root of all; Men do not believe what they profess to believe. It were impossible that the World should be so heartily, so eagerly follow'd and pursued, if the vanity and vexation of it, the emptiness and insufficiency of it, the uncertainty and transitoriness of it, were indeed believed: It were impossible that the great and glorious *God*, the Alsufficient Good, that blessed Jesus, that Heaven and Eternal Happiness, should be so slighted and neglected, if they were *truly*, *really*, and *heartily believed*.

It

It is moſt ſtrange, and yet moſt true, that People ſhould yield up their Hearts unto, and ſpend their beſt Affections upon the things of this preſent evil World, and can think and ſpeak *delightfully* of them, but have no mind to think or ſpeak of *eternal things*. Oh, this beguiling, bewitching, and deceiving World! and, oh, theſe corrupt, carnal, deceitful Hearts of ours, that ſuffer the World thus to deceive us!

It coſt the Heart-blood of Chriſt to deliver his People from this preſent evil World, *Gal.* 1. 4. Could we apprehend the Miſchief this World hath done us, and doth ſtill do us, we ſhould have but *little* kindneſs for it; and if once we could attain the Aſſurance of our title to that World above, we ſhould not care how ſoon we were gone out of this.

3 *Inf.* Thirdly, Hence appears the Unreaſonableneſs of immoderate *Worldly Joy, Sorrow, Fear, Cares* about *viſible temporal things*. Being they are but temporal, paſſing, tranſient, momentany things, why then ſo much care to get and keep them? Why ſo much fear of loſing them? Why ſo much Joy in poſſeſſing? and, why ſo much Trouble in parting with them?

Why ſo much Care and Fear about Life it ſelf, *which is but a Vapour? Jam.* 4. 14. Alas, we rejoice in things of nought, and are grieved for the loſs of Shadows; for ſuch, and no better at beſt, are all *viſible temporal things*, in compariſon of *inviſible eternal things*. Let us all bewail this Folly: O, when ſhall we be wiſe? How long ſhall we ſimple ones love this our ſinful Simplicity? *Prov.* 1. 22. Oh, how long e're we be able to diſcern between Good and Evil? till we know the one thing needful,

ful, and approve and pursue the things which are most excellent? and give up our Hearts entirely to God and Christ?

4 *Inf.* Fourthly, Hence appears the absolute Necessity of Regeneration: Seeing we are by Nature so ignorant, dark, blind, stupid and dead, that we cannot see nor understand the things of God, nor the things that belong to our own Eternal Peace: Therefore we should earnestly seek and pray for Renewing Grace, and that Christ would give us the *Light of Life*; and that God would beget us anew, and give us his sanctifying quick'ning Spirit, and infuse new spiritual Principles of the Divine Nature into our Hearts, and thereby take us off from inordinate minding *visible temporal things*, and turn our minds another way, even towards Himself, and towards Christ and Heaven, that there we may center and place all the Affections of our Hearts, all the Desires and Delights of our Souls: This must be done by the mighty power of God, and we must seek him diligently, to effect this work upon us; and we must also attend on his Word preached and read, and diligently and conscientiously read the Word, searching the Scriptures for this very end and purpose, and fervently beg God's Blessing on the Word, that it may prove to us a Word of Grace, a renewing, converting, sanctifying Word, the Seed of Regeneration. *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.* *John* 17. 17. Thus must we Labour to be regenerated, or else we *shall* never get off our Minds from earthly things.

Se-

Second *Uſe*; *by way of Examination.*

We *All* hope to go to Heaven when we dye, and to enjoy *all thoſe inviſible eternal good things*, do we not? Let us be ſo kind to our own Souls, as to try our Title, and the grounds of our Hopes: Sure here is one Mark, by which we may know whether our Hopes be well grounded or no; to wit, by our Heavenly-mindedneſs. What do we aim at mainly, mind chiefly, look on, and look after principally? Is it *Heaven* or *Earth*? *viſibles* or *Inviſibles*? Let us examine our ſelves: Which way runs the Stream of our Thoughts, the Current of our Affections, the Tide of our Diſcourſes? Which way runs it ſtrongeſt, ſteddieſt? Put this Queſtion cloſe to our Conſciences, and require a direct Anſwer: Let us not *dally* and *ſhuffle*, but be ſerious. Our Apoſtle makes this a diſcriminating Character of a Child of God, of one in Chriſt, and above the power of Condemnation, of one that is born again: *Rom.* 8. 5. *They that are after the fleſh, do mind the things of the fleſh*; the Profits, Honours, Pleaſures, Eaſe, Health, Liberty, of the Fleſh; that is, they mind theſe things *mainly*, *moſtly*, *principally*, *chiefly*; moſt heartily, moſt ſeriouſly, moſt affectionately, moſt delightfully. Theſe *viſible temporal things* lye moſt upon their Thoughts, and lye neareſt their Hearts. This is their Character, and it appears in *all* their Words and Actions.

But they that are after the Spirit, that is, are born of the Spirit, born of God, are in Chriſt, they mind the things of the Spirit; the grace, the work, the witneſs, the comfort and joy of the Spirit; they mind the things which the Spirit hath revealed in the Word; God, and Peace with him; Chriſt,

Chriſt, and Union with him; God's Covenant, and Intereſt therein; Eternal Life, and Title thereto; theſe inviſible eternal things, they mind theſe mainly, chiefly, moſtly, principally, moſt heartily, affectionately, and moſt delightfully and conſtantly. This is their Character, and this is manifeſt alſo in their Words and Actions. Now, let us try our ſelves; What Character have we? Which of theſe two? If we will not do ſo much for our own Souls, as to take a little pains in trying, we have not much love to them. A man may know very much of his State by this: And is it not worth a little Labour, to know whether we be in Chriſt, or no; and whether we ſhall be Saved or Damned eternally? Let us put it home to our Conſciences: Say, O my Soul! what doſt thou mind moſt? What are thy Thoughts moſt exerciſed about? Whereupon are thy Affections moſt fixedly ſet? This is a ſearching mark; oh, that we did all try our ſelves by it! we ſhould be much more heavenly than we are.

The beſt of us all will have cauſe of ſhame and ſorrow, cauſe of ſelf-ſuſpicion and jealouſie, when we ſtrictly compare our ſelves with this Rule; we ſhall find our Hearts ſo earthly, ſo carnal, our Minds ſo fleſhly, ſo ſet upon viſible temporal things, but our Thoughts on inviſible eternal things; ſo ſhort, ſo weak, ſo inconſtant, ſo ſeldom, ſo ſoon tired, and our Affections ſo unſetled, ſo unfixed, that we ſhall have great cauſe to bewail our ſelves, and cry out with St. *Paul*, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death*: *Rom.* 7. 24. And this will make us cry to God alſo, to renew the Spirits of our Minds, and to transform the Image of our Minds; and this ſhould make us look up to God's Covenant

for

for new Hearts, for *Hearts joyned and united to the Lord, Psal.* 86. 11. *Psal.* 57. 7. & 108. 1. Oh what cause have we to bewail the frequent departings and wandrings of our Hearts from God, their slidings from God, and to cry with holy *David, Quicken me, uphold me.* Our Hearts are not fixed nor stayed on God; we do not abide with God.

Third, *Use of Exhortation,*

To this great Duty of most serious minding of, and looking unto *invisible eternal things.* O, let us mind, and look unto, and aim at God, Christ, the Spirit, the Word, the Promises, the great and glorious things purchased by Christ, and prepared for us in the other World: Oh, mind the full enjoyment of *God* and Christ in Heaven for ever and ever; to dwell with him, *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.* Let us mind eternal things in good earnest, with all our Hearts and Souls; Look off, look off visible temporal things, shut your Eyes to the World, turn away your Eyes from beholding Vanity: But open your Eyes towards Heaven, hold your Eyes to invisible eternal things.

Here I shall shew,

I. The Hinderances to this Duty.
II. Means to help us to perform it.
III. Motives to perswade to it.

I. The Hinderances, which are many, and which must be avoided.

1*st*, Hinderance is, living in any known or beloved Sin; this will keep us down from heavenly Meditation, *Heb.* 12. 1. No looking unto Jesus ex-

except we lay aside the Sin that doth so easily beset us; in some, Passion; in some, Weariness of well-doing; in others, Pride or Covetousness, is the Sin that doth easily beset them: This must be laid aside, whatever it be; it must be repented of, and reformed, 1 *Thess.* 5. 22. Abstain from all appearance of Evil; Sin interposeth between God and our Souls, and hides his Face from us: If we would mind the Heavenly Word of God, so as to profit by it, in hearing or reading of it, we must lay aside all known Sin; 1 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2. Sin divides us from God and heavenly things. If we regard any Iniquity in our Hearts, God will not hear our Prayers. *The sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

2*ly*, Worldly Cares, Fears, Joys, Sorrows: If we suffer these to take up our Hearts, and to fill our Minds and Thoughts, there will be no room for heavenly things: We must therefore be watchful, to cast out, and keep out those bad guests; *Luke* 21. 34. *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful in nothing*: If *our* Affections be set on visible temporal things, they cannot be set on invisible eternal things. *No man can serve two Masters, God and Mammon*, saith our Lord. If the World be Master of our *Hearts* and *Minds*, of our *Thoughts* and *Affections*, then surely they cannot be set on GOD, and things above.

3*ly*, Worldly Company, where is nothing but Earthly Discourse. They that are of the Earth, are earthly: Worldly Company will cool the Affections, and dull and deaden the Heart, and draw it from God: Therefore is that Exhortation and Prohibition, *Eph.* 5. 11. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.* True Christians are Christ's Doves, his Turtle-Doves;

Doves, they have no Society with the Birds of Prey; They are Christ's Sheep, what have they to do among Swine? They are his Children, what have they to do among his Enemies? We are not aware of the very great mischief that carnal company doth bring to our Souls. If at any time we have had any communion with *God* in any Ordinance and Duty, and then presently go into vain carnal Company, we shall quickly lose all savour and relish of *God* and *Heavenly things*; as if you eat Hony, and presently eat Gall after, you lose all the taste of Hony: And that's not all, but by being in worldly Company, you will soon be infected, and will bring away on your Spirits the ill savour of the Earth and filthy World; as a man that comes out of a Garden of sweet Flowers, goes and wallows on a stinking Dunghil. The best of us should not go into worldly Company, but as Physicians into a Pest-house, when *lawfully called*, and with our Preservatives with us: We having so much Flesh and Earth in us, Worldly Company will make us more fleshly and earthly.

4*ly*, Pride and High-mindedness. *God resisteth the proud*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *Psal.* 10. 4. There are many precious Promises made to the humble; *Isa* 22.29. God will *dwell* with the humble, teach them, save them: None have so sweet Communion with *God* as humble Souls. Heavenly things and humble Souls are things very suitable and agreeable one to the other.

5*ly*, Sloth and Idleness. 'Tis easie, we say, to go down the Hill, but not so easie to go up: 'Tis *easie*, because *natural*, and *usual*, and *ordinary*, to mind *visible temporal things*; but there must be Pains-taking, Industry, and Labour used, to raise up our Hearts to *invisible eternal things*; a stirring

up our selves, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. And we must often *call upon our own Souls*, and provoke one another, and *all too little*. We must have Resolution and Zeal.

6*ly*, The greatest Hinderance of all is *Unbelief*. Men do not fully believe, nor are fully perswaded of the *Reality* and *transcendent Excellency* of *invisible eternal things*: This is the grand Impediment; Why is not the great *God*, the good *God*, the *Fountain of all Goodness*, the Allsufficient *Good*, minded, thought on, loved, feared, trusted, served no more? but because He is not believed, He is not believed to be that which he is indeed, and which he hath revealed *himself* to be, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Oh, the cursed rooted Atheism and Unbelief that is in all our Hearts, more or less!

Why is not Jesus Christ, Precious Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Lovely, altogether Lovely Jesus, the Brightness of his Father's Glory, the Chiefest of Ten thousands, the fairest of all the Sons of Men, *in whom dwells all fulness*; oh, why is he no more minded, thought on, spoken of? why no more admired, loved, and sought after? but because He is not believed. To them, to all them *that believe, he is precious, most precious*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7.

And why is not Heaven and Happiness that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, that *Everlasting Rest*, in the *full and perfect enjoyment of the Blessed God for ever*, thought on, minded, and laboured after more? but because these things are not *fully* believed. O cursed Unbelief!

Men believe that Life, Liberty, Health, Honour, Estate, &c. are good things, and therefore they mind them, and labour after them, and count

count no Pains too much to obtain them, labouring as it were in the Fire to get those things. Those that believed those better things in the other World, counted those *visible temporal things* of this World, but Toyls and Trifles; *Heb.* 10.34. 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. So *Heb.* 11. throughout. It is our Unbelief is the cause, why God, and Christ, and Heaven have so little of our hearts and minds, so little of our thoughts and affections: Oh, let us *all* bitterly bewail our Unbelief: *Lord, subdue and pardon it.*

These are the *Hinderances.*

II. *The* Means *to help us to this Work, that we may most seriously and most heartily mind invisible eternal things.*

1. *First*, We must labour clearly to know and understand the Truth and Reality, the exceeding Greatness and Excellency of those *invisible eternal things*; as was hinted before: Our ignorance of them is much the cause why we mind them no more. *Ignoti nulla Cupido. No man minds or loves what he knows not.*

Let us set our Hearts in earnest, to consider what it is to enjoy God, who is *All-fulness*; what it is to have Fellowship with the Father and the Son; what it is to have Communion with the Holy Ghost; to have the gracious Presence of the Holy Spirit; to feel the Work, the Witness, the Sealing, the Joy, the Consolation of the Holy Spirit; all which *all true Christians* know and feel in some measure, and rejoice in them.

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Consider also what it is to live in Christ, and to have Christ to live in us, to dwell in our Hearts, to manifest his Love to us; to come in to us, to *sup with us, and we with him*; to take up his Abode with us; what it is to know the Power of his Death, and the Vertue of his Resurrection; to be made one with him, joyned, married to him, made one Spirit with him; and what it is to be made like him here, and what it is to be made like him hereafter, both in Soul and Body, and to appear with him in Glory at last, and to be for ever glorified with him; what it is to *see his Face*, and to *dwell in his presence for ever*. Oh, these are the only things that are worthy of *all* our Hearts and Minds, most worthy of all our Affections and Desires, of all our Labourings, Longings, Pantings, Breathings, Hungrings, and Thirstings of Soul: Oh, shame on us all, that we spend our Affections on Toys and Trifles, on Dreams, Fancies, and Shadows! Oh, that such Folly and Madness, such Brutishness should possess us! Let us lament and lament it. And let us labour to know and understand those high and excellent things, and let us be *fully* perswaded of them, and of their infinite worth and value. These things are worth glorying and rejoycing in. *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom: But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*

Let us consider also the exceeding-great and precious Promises, and what our Blessed Jesus hath purchased, and what God hath prepared for his People in the other World; and let us ponder upon, and

and by Meditation work these things into our Hearts and Minds: Labour for a distinct knowledge of all those things: Labour to prove your particular Right and Title to all those invisible eternal good things, and then you will mind them indeed: A bare Knowledge of them, without an Interest in them, will do you no good.

No wise man will much mind those things in which he hath no Interest; let us then search, and try, whether we have any true Title to these things; whether we have any good and solid ground to hope, that we shall one day be possest of them, and shall certainly enjoy them: Then we shall think of them, and speak of them with Joy and Comfort; when we can say with *Paul*, *There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness:* And we know, that *when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

We *all* hope to enjoy that promised purchased Inheritance, *all* hope to see God in Glory, and to be happy; but let us try our Title by the Word of God, by that Word which must judge us *all* at the last day. We may easily deceive our selves, as those in *Matth.* 7. 21, 22. and as the foolish Virgins; no Deceit so easie, nor so common, nor so dangerous, for it is irrecoverable, and a little serious tryal might prevent this Self-deceiving; Self-searching may prevent Self-deceiving and self-undoing. Briefly then, let us ask our selves,

Is Jesus Christ ours? Then *All* is ours; *All* depends on this. If Christ be ours, God is ours; Pardon, Life, Salvation, Heaven and Earth is ours. 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

Are we Christ's, really and sincerely his? Then He is ours: *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* As

we his, all we are, his? Hearts, Heads, Tongues, Time, Talents; are we all his?

Are we new Creatures? 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature.* Mark it, a new Creature; all old things are paſs'd away; and behold, all things are become new; new Inſides, new Out-ſides, new Principles, new Ends, new Affections, new Deſires, new Delights, new Company, new Language; all new, if new Creatures.

Have we the Spirit of Chriſt in us? *If any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, the ſame is none of his,* Rom. 8. 9. Doth Chriſt live in us? Is Chriſt moſt precious to us? Do we believe in him? Let us try the truth of our Faith; doth it purifie our Hearts? Doth it work by Love, by Love to Chriſt, to all that hath the Image of Chriſt on it? Doth it overcome the World? Doth it ſupport under Trouble? Let us ſee that it be Faith unfeigned, the Faith of *God's* Elect.

Have we with all our Hearts choſen the Lord for our Portion, and placed our Happineſs in him, fixed our beſt Loves, Deſires, and Delights in him, and have we reſigned up our whole ſelves cordially and unreſervedly to him?

Have we broken our League with all Sin, and with all the Idols of our Hearts? Do we hate and deteſt all Sin, and do we keep a continual watch and war againſt all Sin?

Have we an equal reſpect to all *God's* Commandments? Can we deny our ſelves, and part with all things for Chriſt?

Are we the Heirs of the Promiſes? If we be really *Chriſt's, then are we Heirs of the Promiſes*; Gal. 3. 29.

Are we the Children of *God? If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of* all thoſe inviſible eternal things; *Rom.* 8. 17.

Now, if we be the Children of *God*, we are led by the Spirit of *God*, *Rom.* 8. 15. As many as are led by the Spirit of *God*, (juſt ſo many, and no more) are the Children of *God*. If we have the Image of our Heavenly Father on us, and do love him with all our Hearts, and can truſt him, and depend on him in all things, and for all things, and are moſt careful to obey him in all things; if it be ſo with us in Sincerity; then have we a good and firm Right and Title to all thoſe great and glorious things in the other World.

And when we can prove our Right to them, and can call them our own, then ſurely we ſhall think on them; our Hearts and Minds will be ſet upon them, all our Affections will be carried out after them. *Pſal.* 73. 24, 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

When a Soul can in truth, and upon good grounds ſay, My God, my Lord, my Jeſus, then he will in earneſt mind them. *Pſal.* 63. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *O God, thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee; my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee: To ſee thy power and thy glory, ——— becauſe thy loving kindneſs is better than life: my lips ſhall praiſe thee. Thus will I bleſs thee while I live: ——— My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, and my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.* And *v.* 7, 8. *Becauſe thou haſt been my help, therefore in the ſhadow of thy wings will I rejoyce. My*

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ſoul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. And the ground of all this was his Intereſt in *God*; *O God, thou art my God.*

2. If we would have our Hearts and Minds ſet and fixed on *inviſible eternal things*, let us ſeriouſly conſider the nearneſs of thoſe things, of thoſe *inviſible eternal things* unto us, and of us to them; things that are great, but at a diſtance from us, ſeem but ſmall things to us, and but little affect us. The time of our departure hence is at hand, and then farewel for ever to all *viſible temporal things*; our Houſes, our Honours, Eſtates, and Friends, ſhall know us no more; we ſhall have no more converſe with, or enjoyment of any *viſible temporal thing* for ever: And it will not be long e're this parting come.

God is near to every one of us; Chriſt is nigh, the Holy Spirit is nigh, ſtirring and ſtriving with us; the Word is nigh us, even in our Mouths, and in our Hearts, *Rom.* 10. 1. Heaven and Glory are nigh to us, if we be Saints; we are not far from our Father's Houſe, not far from the Kingdom; Hell and Deſtruction nigh to us, if we be wicked, but a Breach between us and everlaſting Damnation; and if we be Saints and Believers, the day of our full Redemption draws nigh, the Coming of Chriſt is at hand, our Salvation at the very Door.

As it is dangerous for the Wicked to put far off the *evil day*, *Amos* 6. 3. ſo it is diſadvantagious to the Godly to put far off the good day.

We ſhall ſhortly, very ſhortly, enter the Confines of Eternity, and converſe with nothing but *inviſible eternal things*, thoſe things that now are out of our ſight, and too much out of our minds; but it were our great Wiſdoms to look on them as

nigh at hand, and to ſpend our Thoughts and Affections upon them. We are diſpleaſed with our Friends, that when we are out of their ſight, we ſhould be out of their Minds: And may not *God* and *Chriſt*, our beſt Friends, be juſtly diſpleaſed with us, that they are ſo much out of our Minds? But though God and Chriſt be inviſible to our bodily Eyes, they are nigh unto us, therefore we ſhould ſtill mind them. *Pſal.* 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord always before me; becauſe he is at my right hand*, &c. *Pſal.* 109. 2, 3, 4, 5.

3. Let us be often diſcourſing and ſpeaking of thoſe inviſible eternal things; let thoſe things be often in our Mouths.

Should not the Children of God be often talking of their Heavenly Father, and of their Father's Houſe, and of that Kingdom and Inheritance which he hath *prepared for them?*

Should not the Heirs of Salvation be often ſpeaking of that Crown of Glory, of Life, of Righteouſneſs that is purchaſed for them, and promiſed to them; and of that *incorruptible Inheritance* that they *are born unto?* 1 *Pet.* 1. 2, 3, 4, 5. Oh! can we have any Title to all the Promiſed Glory, and not ſpeak often of it?

How much is it to be lamented, that thoſe that profeſs themſelves Children of *God*, and Heirs of Heaven, when they come together, that they ſpeak ſo little of *God* and *Heaven!* This is our great Sin, and ſhould be our great Shame and Sorrow.

Whither are we bound? Where are we travelling? Where is our Home, our long Home, our laſt, our everlaſting Home? Where is our Treaſure? Where lies our Inheritance? Is it above or below? Where is our Country? Where is our Father, our Redeemer? Where are all our

plous Relations that slept in Jesus? Are not all these above? And do we so seldom think or speak of these? Shame, shame on us.

Are we born of *God*, born from above, and do we belong to that City, that hath Foundations, to that heavenly *Canaan*, to that *New Jerusalem*? What! and our Minds so glued, our Hearts so fastened to Earthly things, and our Tongues so constantly employed about earthly things? Oh, our idle words! *Matth.* 12. 36. Can our Treasures be in *Heaven*, and our Hearts not there? And, can our Hearts be there, and nothing appear in our words? *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Surely the earthlinesse, vanity, emptinesse, unsavorinesse, frothinesse of our common ordinary Talk, doth but too much discover the vanity and earthlinesse of our Hearts. Oh, that we did all of us lay this to our Hearts: The more we talk of these invisible eternal things, the more we shall mind them.

4. Consider, it is the expresse Duty of every true Christian, to *set his affections upon things above, and not upon things below*, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. Charge the Command of God upon your Consciences; accustom and inure your selves to it: O my Soul, this is as much thy Duty, as to pray, or hear, or read; how long wilt thou neglect it? O, dare not neglect it any longer; begin it presently; call upon God to renew and raise thy Heart.

5. Let us learn that blessed Art of Spiritualizing earthly things, every earthly Mercy, to a Child of *God*, is a taste of Eternal Mercy; every visible temporal thing discovers somewhat of invisible eternal things: This is a sweet work, to converse with God and Heaven in the Creatures: As for instance; When we sit down at Table, re-

member, there is a time coming, when we shall sit down with Christ, and eat and drink at his Table, in his Kingdom; that is, we shall enjoy free and intimate Communion with him in Heaven: And let us labour to raise our Hearts from temporal to spiritual things, and be much in praising, adoring, and admiring God in the Creatures.

6. Be convinced also, that all our happiness and comfort, both here and hereafter for ever, lyeth not in any, or all, of the sensible temporal things, but *all* lyeth in those invisible eternal things: It lyeth not in having *Honours*, *Riches*, *Pleasures*, &c. for a man may be happy without them, as *Job* and *Lazarus* were; and miserable with them, as *Haman*, *Ahab*, *Dives*, and others were. *Psal.* 144. 15. *Yea, happy are the people whose God is the Lord.* Happy indeed, if *God*, *Christ*, and *Heaven* be ours, happy for ever, or else miserable for ever.

7. And Lastly, Let us labour to be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, or else we shall never seriously and heartily mind invisible eternal things; as was shewed before. We must get those invisible eternal Principles of Renewing Grace planted in our *Hearts*, the Divine Nature, the Life of *God*, the Spirit of our heavenly Father, to renew our Spirits, or else we shall never mind those things in good earnest; for which purpose, let us go to *God*, call, cry to him for Renewing Grace, *Psal.* 51. 10. Let us look up to, and lay hold on God's Covenant, *Ezek.* 11. 19. go to the Promise, *Luke* 11. 13. *If you, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give his Spirit to those that ask him?* A precious Promise indeed; let us rest upon this Pro-

promise, and most earnestly beg *God* to perform it to us. Old Bottles will not hold new Wine, nor old Hearts retain Heavenly things: New Hearts we must have, heavenly, holy Hearts, or we shall never mind heavenly things as we ought.

III. *Motives to this Duty.*

1. Consider, that thus to look unto, and mind invisible eternal things, is the express Character of every true Christian. No man can approve himself to be a true Christian, and be a total Stranger to this Work; for, to be a true Christian, is to be like Christ. Now Jesus Christ minded those invisible eternal things, as is most evident in the whole course of his Life; his Heart was in Heaven while his Body was on Earth, *John* 3. 13. Shall we profess our selves Christians, and not be like Christ, nor have the Character of Christians?

2. Consider, this will be a sure sign and clear evidence to us, of our interest in, and title to all those invisible eternal good things in the other World; *Matth.* 6. 20, 21. Where the Heart is, there the Treasure is. If our Hearts and Minds, Thoughts and Affections are on *God*, on *Christ*, and *Heaven*, it is a sure sign that these are ours. An heavenly Mind is as good a sign that we belong to Heaven as any is; as was also shewed before.

3. This will begin our Heaven upon Earth; these heavenly things minded, affected, delighted in, will yield such joy and comfort, as to begin our very Heaven here; when Faith and Hope, Joy and Praise, Love, Desire and Delight are exercised on *God*, and on *Christ*, and *Glory*, we shall be filled with Joy and Peace; as, *Rom.* 15. 13. 1 *Per.* 1. 8.

Pſal. 31. 7. Oh, then let us labour to begin our Heaven here, by our Heavenly-mindedneſs.

4. This will yield Contentment and Comfort, Satisfaction and Peace to our Souls in every condition: It will ſweeten every bitter Cup: To think on *God* as our Father, and on Chriſt as our Redeemer, Head, and Husband, and on all the ſweet Promiſes, of which we are Heirs, what comfort will this bring to our Souls? *Lam.* 3. 33. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* Iſa. 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* Rom. 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* With many other exceeding great and precious Promiſes, which our good *God* hath made, that our Faith might feed upon them, and find ſatisfaction, or elſe our Souls would faint.

5. This will fit us for every Duty to *God* and *man:* The more we think on God and heavenly things, the more conſcientious ſhall we be in our Duties to Man; becauſe it is for the Lord's ſake, from whom we look for the Reward; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks to Servants, *Eph.* 6. 5, 6, 7. And for Duties to *God*, it will make us ſerve *God* cheerfully, delightfully, and conſtantly, having the Glory of God, the enjoyment of him, and the *Recompence of Reward* in our Eye: Oh, how will it quicken, raiſe, animate, and encourage us! For why are all thoſe great and glorious, inviſible, eternal things propoſed, and promiſed to us, but that we ſhould mind them, aim at them, and live in the lively hopes, and comfortable expectations of enjoying them? *Heb.* 11. 6, 24. & 1. 1, 2, 3. 1 *Cor.* 15. laſt. *Therefore be ſtedfaſt, unmovable, always abounding in*

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the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

6. This will serve to encrease and strengthen Grace; for the more we mind those invisible eternal things; the stronger will be our Love, our Faith, our Hope, and our Patience; yea, the more heavenly and spiritual we shall grow; and the more useful, savory, and profitable in all our Discourses. By our heavenly-mindedness we *shall smell of Heaven* in all our Converses and Communications, to the advantage of others.

7. This is one principal way of enjoying Communion with God here in this World; for by this we open our hearts to God, raise up our Desires after him, spend our Thoughts and Affections upon him; and in these heavenly Meditations God communicates his Light and Love, his Grace and Peace to our Souls. By these Meditations on invisible eternal things, our Souls converse with God, talk with God, walk with God, have our conversations with God; and this is most sweet and contentful to gracious Souls; this is to live in God, and to live the Life of God; and it is the sum of all our happiness here and hereafter. The enjoyment of God's good presence here, in acts of Communion with him, will produce greatness of Joy; and the enjoyment of God's glorious presence hereafter, in the uninterrupted Acts of Communion with him in *Heaven*, will produce *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore*, *Psal.* 16. last.

8. By this looking to, and affectionately minding *invisible eternal things*, we shall be more and more changed into the image and likeness of them. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the*

Lord. These believing, loving sights of heavenly things will change us into the image of them.

9. By this we shall be made more and more willing and desirous to leave this World, and to go to a better. Compare this Text with the beginning of the next Chapter, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3. the Apostle having said, *We look not on visible temporal things, but on those things which are not seen, which are eternal*; presently adds, for we know that *when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; for in this (*House*) we groan earnestly to be clothed upon with our *House* which is from *Heaven.* And this made *Paul* desire to be dissolved that he might *be with Christ*, which was far better, or best of all; *Phil.* 3.

Certainly, such as really apprehend, and truly believe those *invisible eternal things*, and their title to them and portion in them, will be *really willing* to dye, that they may enjoy them, knowing that they lye on the other side of Death, and cannot be enjoyed, but by dying, and after Death, Death being the In-let to all that purchased, promised Glory. Now, the more we do seriously think and meditate on those glorious things, the more willing we shall be to leave all those fading, vain, and vexing Comforts, to enjoy those eternal Delights: And it is a great Mercy and sweet Priviledge to be willing to dye; and I know nothing will more effect this willingness in us.

Now, let all those Motives effectually perswade us to draw off our hearts from those *visible temporal things*, and to set our Affections *upon things above.* How long shall vain Thoughts lodge within us? how long shall this present evil World gnaw and feed upon our Spirits, consuming and wasting them,

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and eating out our time and strength? how long *shall* the God of this World blind our Minds, and the Dust of it fill our Eyes? how long shall we misplace our Affections, and mistake our Rest? Our Rest is not here, our Heaven and Happiness is not here; Earth is going from us, and we from it, and shall we hug what we cannot hold? Shall we kiss and embrace that which is withering in our hands, and dying in our arms? Are there not infinitely-better things to be minded? Duke *de Alva* wickedly said, when one told him of an Eclipse that was then present, *I have so much to do on Earth, I have no leisure to mind Heaven.* O, that it may not be so said of any of us.

Let us call to mind what those *invisible eternal things* are aforementioned, as *God*, *Christ*, the *Holy Ghost*, the *Promises*, the *Purchased Inheritance*, the *Glory of Heaven*, *&c.* withal, let us mind Christ's second Coming to Judgment, the manner and end of it, 2 *Thess.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. which the Apostle often spoke and wrote of, and minded, *Tit.* 2. 13, 14. the glorious Appearing of the great *God* and our *Saviour*; the Resurrection of the Body, and the manner of it, 1 *Cor.* 15. the full Redemption and glorious Manifestation of the Sons of *God*; the happy uniting of the Souls and Bodies of the Saints after so long a Separation; and the uniting and solemn Marriage of both to Christ, the King of *Glory*; the passing of the Saints into *Heaven* with Christ in Triumph; their living for ever with *God*, seeing his Face, and knowing him as we are known: Oh, that we could mind these things, and set our Faith and Love, our Hopes, Desires, and Delights on work upon these things, what sweet Contentment, what Soul-refreshing Joy and Comfort would such thoughts yield to our Souls, even

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in the midſt of all our Troubles? No wonder we are ſuch Strangers to the Joy of the Lord, becauſe we are ſuch Strangers to *God* himſelf, and to the great things of his Kingdom.

I ſhall conclude this Uſe with that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. *Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs.* Be diligent to prepare for the enjoyment of all thoſe great and glorious things, and to ſecure our title to them; which Preparation conſiſts in two things mainly, as expreſt in that Scripture,

1. In a ſtate of Reconciliation with *God.*
2. In a ſpotleſs, blameleſs Converſation.

1. In a ſtate of Reconciliation with *God. Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace:* There will be a moſt ſtrict and accurate ſearch made at the laſt day; all thoſe that look for thoſe inviſible eternal good things at laſt, muſt be exceeding careful about this, to make this the Mark, Deſign, and Aim all their Life, and at Death, that they may be found in a reconciled ſtate, in a ſtate of Peace with *God.* This is the critical point, the main hinge, whereupon hangs all the ſafety and happineſs of a Man or Woman for Eternity: Not whether rich or poor, high or low, honourable or contemptible in this World, the Differences and Diſtinctions will ſignifie nothing then; nor whether *Presbyterian* or *Independent*, *&c.* but whether reconciled to *God* or no. This ſtrict ſearch will be made by the Lord, who cannot be blinded nor deceived.

And the conſideration of the iſſue of this ſearch ſhould quicken us to diligence in our Preparation, which ſhall be, 1*ſt*, on them that ſhall then be found not reconciled; the danger will be to their whole

man,

man, Soul and Body, *Depart ye curſed, &c.* moſt dreadful, and moſt intolerable. 2*dly*, On them that are found reconciled, their Comfort will be unſpeakable; the Lord Jeſus will own them *all*, as the Purchaſe of his Blood, and will embrace them all, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, &c.* and will commend them, *Well done, &c.* and will crown them with a Diadem of Eternal Glory.

Oh then, let us preſently engage *all* the Powers of our Souls, in ſtriving to be found of *God* in Peace. And if we will be found of *God* in Peace at that day, we muſt

1. Fall out with all Sin, and make an open breach with all Ungodlineſs, and *all Worldly luſts*, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. No Peace with *God*, ſo long as we have Peace with any Sin: We muſt ſearch for our Sins of Heart and Life, heartily repent of them, declare open War againſt them *all*, not regarding any Iniquity in our Hearts, but hating and mortifying all. Go to *God*, to give you ſound Repentance; *Acts* 5. 31. & 3. 19.

2. Fall in, and cloſe unfeignedly with Jeſus Chriſt, the only Peace-maker, accepting him on his Terms, taking him for Only Lord and Saviour, reſigning up our whole ſelves unto him in *all things*, giving him the Preheminence in us, and over us, and heartily ſubmitting to his government by his Word and Spirit. Thus by true Repentance and Faith we are to make our Peace with *God*. And this is the ſum of the Goſpel, *Acts* 20. 21. *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: Repentance, in order to the obtaining of our Pardon: *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the time of refreſhing ſhall come. Acts* 5. 31. Chriſt is *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins.*

Job

Job 22. 21. And by Faith in Christ we take hold of *God's* Strength; *Isa.* 27. 5. *Which is the mercy of God in Christ, this is the strength of God, to save sinners.* Lay hold then on this Strength of God, *viz.* the Mercy of God in Christ, and so shall we make Peace with *God: Rom.* 5. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* Make sure and sound work then, in Repentance and Faith; let us often try our Repentance and Faith; dally not, nor delay in this business, we are all upon the Borders of Eternity, we are all near those *invisible eternal things.*

This is the common Counsel we give every body on their Sick-beds; *You must make your peace with God*, we say, but how this may be done, few know or mind. O, let us mind those great matters: Have we unfeignedly repented from dead Works unto Life? Is all Sin hated and sought out? Are we truly converted? *Acts* 26. 18. & 3. 19. Sound Conversion, a thorow Change of Heart and Life, is the surest sign of true Repentance. Have we Faith in Jesus Christ? the Faith of *God's Elect?* Faith unfeigned, that purifieth the Heart, worketh by Love, overcometh the World, unites to Christ, and draws Life from him, to live as he lived, and walk as he walked? Let us try our Repentance by these Texts, *Jer.* 31. 19. *Joel* 2. 14. *Isa.* 55. 7. *Matt.* 3. 8. *Heb.* 6. 1. *Thorow Examination* of *Heart* and *Life*, *Clear Confession*, *Hearty Humiliation*, *Self-Abhorrency*, *Thorow Reformation*, will prove our Repentance true and sound.

Q. *How shall I know that I have truly believed?*

A. Hast thou found it an hard Work to believe, a Work altogether above thy own Power?

Hast

Hast thou seen and felt thy lost Estate by Nature?

Hast thou seen the *Excellency* of Christ, and thy absolute necessity of him? Is he most precious to thy Soul?

Hath thy Soul been drawn to Christ, made heartily *willing* to close with Christ upon his own Terms? to take him for your only Lord and Saviour? hath all this been wrought in thee by the Word? Dost thou value Faith as a Jewel? Dost thou rely on Christ, and trust him with all things, and for all things? Doth this bring Peace to thy Soul? Dost thou draw Life and Strength from Christ? Doth thy Faith in him support thee in Trouble? What Service doth it do thee in time of Trouble? It is the greatest Support the poor Saints have in all their Afflictions; as *Heb.* 11. throughout.

Our great Business lies upon making sure and clear the Truth of our Repentance and Faith, and we must go to *God* for both, for they are his special gifts: Also we must go to Christ, he is the Author and Giver of them; *Acts* 5. 31. *Heb.* 12. 1, 2. And we should be often trying our Repentance and Faith, for without these no Soul can ever attain unto Salvation; and with them no Soul shall ever miss it.

The penitent Believers are the only heirs of the Promises; *all* the great and glorious things of the other World, which the faithful *God*, who cannot lye, hath promised, and which our Blessed Jesus hath purchased with his most precious Blood, they do *all* belong to penitent Believers, and to none else. The exceeding great and precious Promises, are those sweet Breasts of Consolation, which they should lye upon, and suck continually, and by two immutable things (to wit, the Word and Oath of *God*)

God) wherein it is impoſſible that *God* ſhould lye, theſe Promiſes are confirmed, that the heirs of the Promiſes might have (not weak, but) ſtrong Conſolation, *Heb.* 6. 17.

Fourth *Uſe, for Lamentation.*

Theſe things are to be lamented:

I. The great ignorance of thoſe *inviſible eternal things.* Our Lord lamented and wept over *Jeruſalem* for this, *Luke* 19. 21, 22. *If thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace.*

It is a lamentable thing, that People living under the *cleareſt Diſcoveries* and *brighteſt Diſplays* of thoſe *inviſible eternal things*, ſhould yet be ſo groſly ignorant of them, and ſo unacquainted with them, as God complains of *Iſrael*, *Hoſ.* 4. 1, 6. & 8. 12. No knowledge of *God* in the Land, though it was the only Land in all the World then that had the means of Knowledge; *Hoſ.* 8. 12. *I have written to them the great things of my law, but they have counted them ſtrange things.* Look over thoſe particulars afore-mentioned, and we ſhall find, that there is very little true diſtinct knowledge of them in the Land.

Obj. *But we do know theſe things.*

Anſ. If we do know *God*, why do we not obey him? *Tit.* 1. 16. To *profeſs* to *know God, and in works to deny him*, is the Character of a *Reprobate.* Why do we not truſt him? *Pſal.* 9. 10. *They that know his name will put their truſt in him.* 1 John 2. 3, 4. & 4. 17. What likeneſs have moſt Men and Women to *God* and *Chriſt*? What Fruits of the Spirit do appear? *Gal.* 5. 22. but the Fruits of the Fleſh are manifeſt. What Power, Sweetneſs, and Com-

Comfort do Men find in the Word and Promiſes? how *little* are moſt affected, when they read or hear of *all* the great things purchaſed by Chriſt, and prepared in *Heaven* for Believers? What fixed, delightful Thoughts and ſerious Meditations are ſpent upon theſe things? Alas! alas! whoſe Conſcience doth not accuſe him? Whoſe Heart that hath any tenderneſs, doth not ſmite him for his neglect of this?

While I am writing this, my Conſcience flies in my Face, and chargeth me with guilt: "O pardon me, Lord, through the Blood of Chriſt, "and give me true Repentance: Let me be aſhamed and even confounded for my woful neglect "of minding inviſible eternal things: I am convinced of my guilt, and bleſſed be God for that. "O give me an heavenly heart, let in more of "Heaven to my heart.

O ſhew thy ſelf to me,
Or take me up to thee.

II. It is a Lamentable thing, that thoſe high, glorious, inviſible eternal things ſhould be ſo *little* believed by us: They are little known, but leſs believed: They cannot but be known to us in ſome meaſure; they have been ſo often preach'd to us, and we have ſo often read of them: *Their ſound hath gone out to the ends of the earth, Rom.* 10.19. *Did not* Iſrael *know?* Doth not *England* know? Then we muſt be ſtark deaf and blind. Some Knowledge in our heads we muſt needs have; but certainly here is the Root-Sin, the Spring of *all* Ungodlineſs, even Unbelief; whatever People profeſs, theſe things are not believed; People are not *fully* perſwaded in their *Hearts* and *Souls*, of the Truth, of the Excellency, and of the Reality of thoſe

those things, *Who hath believed our Report? Isa.* 53. 1. *and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* to make Souls believe, and to work effectual Faith in them? Surely to very few.

A very bare *historical Faith* is wanting, but much more a *cordial, practical Perswasion* of those things; for by true Faith we come to have an Interest in *all* these eternal good things, and if we had an Interest in them, we should mind them more.

Those *invisible eternal things* spoken of in the holy Scripture, signifie no more to most of us, than those Mountains of Spices, and Mines of Gold do, that are in the *Indies*, which we never hope to see or possess, and for which none of us will part with our poor Cottages: Alas! alas! it were impossible, if we did *really believe* those things above, and that they may be had by us, but that we should take more pains to get a Title to them, and having once got a Title, surely we should mind them more than we do.

Now the grand Reasons why we that profess that we know and believe those great things of the other World, yet take so *little pains* to be assured of our Right to them, are these, *viz.* our *false Faith*, our *false Hope*, and our *inordinate Love of the World*. Cou'd we get these three Thieves out of our hearts, it wou'd be otherwise with us.

1. Our *False Faith*, building our Faith on the Mercy of God, and Merits of Christ in general, not considering whether those Conditions are wrought in us, to which the Mercy of God is promised, and to which the Merits of *Christ* do belong. *Isa.* 1. 16. & 55. 7. *Rom.* 8. 9. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. *Heb.* 5. 9. *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. & 16. 24. & 10. 34. By *all* which places we *shall* find, that the Mercy of God belongs to the penitent return-

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ing Sinner, and that thoſe only can *truly claim* an Intereſt in Chriſt, that ſubmit to his Yoke, that have his Spirit, that are new Creatures, that deny themſelves, and give up themſelves to the Government of *Chriſt*.

2. Our *Falſe Hope*; that deceived thoſe eminent Profeſſors in *Matth.* 7. 21. and the fooliſh Virgins, *Matth.* 25. and which deceives all Hypocrites and formal Chriſtians, that build their Hopes upon outward Profeſſion, Priviledges, the performance of religious Duties, outward Reformation, *&c.* not minding that expreſs word in 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every one that hath this hope*, (that is, to ſee Chriſt in Glory, and to be made like unto him) *purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.* Col. 1. 27. *Chriſt in you the hope of glory:* Not Chriſt without you, profeſſed by you, but Chriſt in you, formed in you, dwelling in your Hearts by Faith, living and reigning in you by his Word and Spirit, that is the *Hope of Glory*, the true and only ground of true *Hope of Glory*.

3. *Inordinate Love of the World.* 1 John 2. 14, 15. *If we be friends of this world, we are enemies to God:* Too much love of Life, Liberty, Eaſe, Relations, *&c.* our Hearts are let out ſtrongly after theſe, therefore our good *God* doth oftentimes ſtrip his deareſt Children of theſe, in love to their Souls, to take off their Affections from them, that they may place them on better things, where they are better beſtowed.

III. It is Lamentable alſo, that thoſe *inviſible, eternal, great* and *glorious things* ſhould be no more minded, thought upon, conſidered, and ſpoken of by Profeſſors, that hope ſhortly to enjoy them. God, Chriſt, Glory, Heaven, are ſeldom in mens

Minds

Minds and Thoughts: What are moſt Peoples Morning and Evening Thoughts? *Pſal.* 49. 11. What vain Thoughts lodge in our Hearts? *Jer.* 4. 14. Oh, how little talk is there of theſe things amongſt us? Is God our Father? Is Chriſt our Head and Husband? Is the Holy Ghoſt our Counſellour and Comforter? Is the Word of God our Rule and Guide, our ſpiritual Food and Nouriſhment, our Comfort and Conſolation? Are the Promiſes our great Charter, Heaven and Glory our Inheritance? And do we indeed hope to enjoy all theſe things for ever and ever, and yet think no more, and ſpeak no more of them? Can this be ſo? Can our hopes be good and well grounded? Let us not deceive our ſelves.

IV. It is Lamentable, that thoſe great things ſhould be no more laboured after: *Joh.* 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which periſheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life.* Prov. 2. 2, 3, 4. *Iſa.* 55. 2, 3. We labour for that which is not Bread, not Bread for our Souls; and ſpend that which is better than Mony, our Spirits and Time, for that which doth not, cannot ſatisfie. Why ſhould *viſible temporal things* have ſo much of our hearts, heads, tongues, hands, time, ſtrength and all, and thoſe *inviſible eternal things* have ſo little? Is there any colour of Reaſon for it? Are not thoſe *inviſible eternal things* infinitely better than the other? Certainly it is, becauſe they are not known nor believed, nor minded, that they are no more laboured after.

How do we diſhonour *God*, and *Chriſt*, and the *Promiſes*? how do we undervalue *Chriſt's Purchaſe*, and *Eternal Life*, when we lay out our ſelves ſo much for the World, and ſo little for theſe?

How

How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation? Heb. 2. 3.

V. It's lamentable alſo, that the loſs of the means of the diſcovery of thoſe *inviſible eternal things*, ſhould no more affect and trouble us: *Lam.* 1. 7. *Jeruſalem remembred in the days of her affliction all her pleaſant things, that ſhe had in the days of old.* A Famine of the Word is the worſt, *Amos* 8.

VI. And it is lamentable, that thoſe who know, believe, deſire, and labour after thoſe things themſelves, ſhould be no forwarder and readier to commend thoſe things to others, and ſhould take no more pains to perſwade and draw others to look after them: Oh, how few cry out to others with holy *David*, *Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my ſoul?*

VII. And no leſs lamentable is it, that thoſe who claim an Intereſt in all thoſe great and glorious good things, and hope to enjoy them hereafter, that thoſe perſons ſhould no more expreſs the power of them in their Lives; that they ſhould no more rejoyce in them, and be no more raiſed in their Spirits, and gladded in their Hearts with the fore-thoughts of them; and that they ſhould live no more comfortably upon them: It's ſad, that thoſe thus intereſted in God, and Chriſt, and Glory, and that are the Expectants of that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, ſhould not live better lives, more exemplary, ſhining, profitable, joyful lives: We that look for ſuch things, what manner of perſons ought we to be in *all manner of holy converſation?* It's ſad alſo, that ſuch ſhould bear up with no more ſtrength, holy courage and

and confidence, in the midſt of the Troubles of this ſhort Life, ſeeing they hope for ſuch glorious things in the other World: We ſee how bravely the Primitive Chriſtians carried themſelves in all their Sufferings, by looking unto, minding, and thinking upon thoſe *inviſible eternal things:* Oh, could we keep them in our view, and keep our Eye on them, we ſhould not faint nor ſink under any of our Troubles. We look too much on, and mind too much thoſe *viſible temporal things*, and look too little to the *Inviſible God*, to our *Bleſſed Jeſus*, and *Eternal Glory*. Oh, that *God* would encreaſe and ſtrengthen our Faith, and help us to live in the lively actings and exerciſe of it. By it we ſtand. Oh, that we could live more by Faith, and leſs by Senſe; 2 *Cor.* 5. 7.

Fifth *Uſe*, *for Inſtruction.*

If we would ſet our Hearts and Minds on thoſe *inviſible eternal things*, we muſt

1. Be much in Prayer: Pray, oh, pray for new Hearts, old Hearts will not hold heavenly things. Pray for Saving Light and Knowledge, *Epheſ.* 1. 17, 18. Pray that ye may clearly apprehend and underſtand thoſe things: Pray for Faith, that you may really believe them, and may be fully perſwaded of the Truth and Excellency of them. *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* Pray for Love, that your Hearts may be throughly and truly affected with them; that you may reliſh and ſavour them, and may feel, taſte, and ſee the goodneſs of them: Pray for ſtrength of Faith and Love, that you may act thoſe and other Graces, as Hope, Joy, Deſire, and Delight upon thoſe heavenly things. Pray without ceaſing; pray fervently for theſe things,

and

and never leave praying till you obtain. Tell God what an earthly, empty, carnal Heart you have, and how impossible it is for you your selves, to make it heavenly: Complain to the God of all Grace, who can make all Grace to abound.

2. Search the Scriptures diligently; Read the Word of God conscientiously; for there all those great and glorious things are discovered: And labour to believe what you hear and read; and to get the power and efficacy of God's Truths on your Spirits; 2 *Cor.* 4. 4, 6.

3. Be watchful against all Sin, and against the World, and the Lusts of the Flesh: Be much in mortification of your inordinate Affections: *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 5. compared. Watch against vain thoughts, and strive in God's strength to draw up your hearts to Heaven, and hold them there.

4. Seriously and often consider the great and real difference between *visible* and *invisible* things, between *temporal* and *eternal* things, uncertain and certain things, transitory and permanent things; between those things that respect the mortal Body, and those that concern the immortal Soul; between those things that are the Portion of Reprobates, and those that are the Portion of God's Elect. Oh, consider the great difference between those things which are the Effects of Common Providence, and those that are the Fruits of God's everlasting Love, and Christ's most precious Blood. Surely a due and deep consideration of the vast difference which is between these things, would help us to mind eternal things.

5. Consider what taste these *visible temporal things* will have in a dying hour; surely either none at all or a bitter one. Oh then, what will Honours, Riches, Pleasures signifie? Oh then, how much better

better and ſweeter will thoſe *inviſible eternal things* be to a poor Soul? Oh then, an Intereſt in God and in Chriſt, a Pardon, a Title to Eternal Life, Aſſurance of Salvation, will be things of value, And why ſhould they not be ſo now?

6. Converſe much with heavenly-minded Chriſtians; but, alas! where ſhall we find them? Let us all bewail our horrible Earthlineſs, our Earthly Diſcourſe, all Earth in our Thoughts, Earth in our Mouths, and yet hope to go to Heaven at laſt, and live in Heaven for ever; O, how unlikely! Surely, if I am not very much miſtaken, I think, a great many of our Profeſſors will be miſtaken at laſt, and that will be dreadful, becauſe irrecoverable. *O Lord, give thy poor Servant an heavenly Heart.*

Sixthly. *The* Laſt *Uſe is, for Comfort to thoſe that do mind and look unto thoſe* inviſible eternal things *in good earneſt.*

For your Comfort, conſider,

1. This is to you an Evidence of your Intereſt in *all* thoſe great and glorious things: That you do thus mind and converſe with heavenly things, with God, and Chriſt, and Glory; it is a good ſign that theſe are *all* your own, that you have a good Title to them. An heavenly Mind is a very good ſign of one that belongs to Heaven.

2. You *ſhall* ſhortly enjoy and poſſeſs them *all*: Where Chriſt is, there (ſhortly) ſhall his Servants be: He will not always dwell in Heaven without you; nor will he always be abſent from you; no, but he will *come again, and receive you to himſelf, that where he is, there you may be alſo, John* 14. 1, 2, 3. And where is he, but at the right hand of the Throne

Throne of his Father? and *there you shall be also: when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him also in glory*, Col. 3. 3, 4. Now you can see and think on those *invisible eternal things* but darkly and confusedly, but then you shall see clearly, yea, possess and enjoy them for ever.

3. This your minding of heavenly things will very much sweeten your present Sufferings: And this brings me to the consideration of the last thing in the scope of the Text, namely, the help or benefit those Primitive Christians had, by their looking unto those *invisible eternal things*, which was, that thereby they were supported under their present Sufferings; *Ver.* 16. *We faint not, while we look not on things that are seen, but on things that are not seen.* Hence may we observe this Doctrinal Conclusion.

Doct. *That a believing sight, and serious minding of unseen eternal things, is a singular means of sweet support to poor Christians under all their Troubles.*

This flows from the scope of the Text, *We faint not*, say they, but rather we gather strength and courage, and *our inner man is renewed day by day; while we look not at those things which are seen, but at those*, &c.

Looking off from visible temporal things doth much help to support God's People under their Troubles: but looking on upon invisible eternal things doth help more. Contrition of our Affections to visible temporal things is very useful, but the fixation of our Affections on invisible eternal things, is more useful to our Support and Comfort. *Psal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living,*

Ver. 14. So *Heb.* 11. 26, 27. By Faith *Moſes* endured, as ſeeing him that is inviſible: *Moſes* could never have endured all thoſe hard things, if he had looked only on thoſe things which are ſeen, but he looked on the inviſible God, and the unſeen Jeſus, and on the Promiſes, the Recompence of Reward; he had a fixed Eye to thoſe great things; his mind was ſetled on theſe, and that carried him through all. So *Heb.* 10. 34. *They took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing in themſelves they had in Heaven a better, and a more enduring ſubſtance.* So *Heb.* 11. 9, 10, 13. they endured the condition of Strangers and Pilgrims (uſually a ſad and troubleſome condition) becauſe they looked for a City, an inviſible eternal City: They embraced the Promiſes, and minded them. And to this our Lord leads us, in pronouncing thoſe Bleſſings, *Mat.* 5. 10, 12. That *great* ſhould *be their reward in Heaven.*

Reaſ. 1. Becauſe the bleſſed tendency, the powerful efficacy, and ſweet fruits of all a Chriſtians Troubles, as to our part, much depends on this Work and Duty performed by us. Let us mind this: What is the tendency and fruit of a Chriſtian's Troubles? See the foregoing Verſe, *They work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* A bleſſed tendency indeed, ſweet fruit!

Q. *But how are Afflictions uſeful and effectual to produce thoſe ſweet fruits?*

Anſ. Some things are done on God's part, and ſome on our part: On God's part, He makes Afflictions uſeful, to fit us for that weight of Glory, as was ſhewed before, by following thoſe Afflictions with the Bleſſing of his Word, and Power of his Spi-

Spirit, and ſo makes them uſeful to thoſe happy ends, *Pſal.* 94. 12. as, 1*ſt*, By diſcovering, imbittering, and cleanſing them from Sin, *Deut.* 8. 2. *Gen.* 41. 21. 1 *Kin.* 17. 18. *Iſa.* 59. 11, 12. 2*ly*, By drawing Souls nearer to God, *Pſal.* 142. 4, 5. *Pſal.* 31. 11, 12, 13, 14. 3*ly*, By crucifying their Affections to the things of this Life. 4*ly*, By making them more diligent and ſerious in their preparation for that ſtate of Bleſſedneſs. Thus God bleſſeth Afflictions.

But all doth not lye on God's part; this Bleſſing is attained by us, *while we look not at thoſe things which are ſeen, which are temporal; but at thoſe things which are not ſeen, which are eternal.* Thoſe Bleſſings of Afflictions are not received, nor thoſe Benefits and Advantages obtained by us, while we ſtand looking and muſing, poring and pondering *upon thoſe things which are ſeen.* So long as our Hearts and Minds are ſtill fixed upon our viſible Loſſes and Croſſes, and upon the earthly Comforts that we are deprived of; and ſo long as our Thoughts and Affections are ſtill ſet on and glued to thoſe viſible temporal things, ſo long we go without thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits: But we muſt look off thoſe things, and look up, and mind and meditate on thoſe inviſible eternal things; we muſt ſet Faith and Love, and Hope on work, in viewing and reviewing, in conſidering and contemplating, in apprehending and applying that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Now, while we do ſo, we are in the right and ready way to obtain the rich Bleſſings of all our Afflictions, and ſo we receive Comfort and Support under them all.

It is the plentiful Harveſt hoped for, and believed, that ſweetens the ſtormy Seed-time. It's a dangerous miſtake, to expect too much from the Creature, and too much comfort here in this World, for here is not our Reſt. All men would have Peace, Comfort, and Happineſs, but they would have it from the Creature, rather than from God. *Pſal.* 4. 6. Believers themſelves, that would have their Comforts from *God*, yet would have them here alſo, and would not ſtay for them till hereafter, ſaying with the Diſciples upon the Mount, *It is good to be here*; whereas here in this World we are to have but ſips, crumbs, drops, glances, glimpſes; at moſt, but ſome Firſt-fruits of *Canaan*; that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* is reſerved for the other World. The Inheritance is reſerved in Heaven for us; 1 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. and we muſt wait, for our Harveſt is not here; we are not come home. It doth not yet appear what we *ſhall* be, the quiet and peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs come not till afterwards; the great Reward, the full Reward, is in Heaven, not here.

2d *Reaſon* is, Becauſe (as I think) the Work of Saving Faith (by which mainly we are ſupported) doth not conſiſt only in looking backward on the Croſs of Chriſt, and his payment of our Ranſom by his precious Blood; but alſo in looking forward on the Crown of Chriſt, and the Glory he hath purchaſed for us. *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* Saving Faith is, not only to believe what our dear Lord hath already done on Earth for us, in the great work of Redemption; but alſo unfeignedly and firmly to believe thoſe things which we

we never saw nor did ever Man see, and to hope and look for them so really, as to let go *all* worldly Hopes and Happiness, rather than hazard the loss of those invisible things. This is an eminent part of Faith, whereby the Just do live; 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

It is upon our clear Apprehensions and firm Expectations of that unseen and eternal Felicity, in the full enjoyment of the Blessed God, that both our Peace and Safety doth depend.

We can have no solid Peace, while we look for much Comfort and Content from the Creature, in this our present Pilgrimage and Prison; for in doing so, we looking for more in the Creature than is in it, we lose our Comforts, and then complain for want of them; for our looking for so much from them, and looking so much on them, provokes God to take them from us; and when they are gone, we are troubled.

If eternal Joys, and everlasting Consolations were more in our Minds, if the *Joy of our Lord*, *Matt.* 25. 21. were more in our Thoughts and Affections, surely spiritual Joy would more at present abound in our Hearts: *Rom.* 15. 13. *The God of consolation would fill us with joy and peace in believing*: believing Apprehensions of those invisible eternal Joys, would breed in us some refreshing Joys for the present. So 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. No wonder we are so comfortless, and walk so sadly, while those things which should raise us and comfort us, are so little in our Minds and Thoughts, and we such Strangers above. We must needs faint when we lay by our Cordials, and make no use of them, and when we lay by our Supports, and mind them not. Temporal things must needs affect us and affist us,

when eternal things are out of sight, and out of mind.

Mark this: When Christians do not only let fall their expectations and hopes of the unseen promised Glory, and let the thoughts of them decay and dye away in them; but also heighten their hopes and expectations from the Creature, and earnestly and eagerly pursue the same; then do they most certainly prepare for their own Disquiets, Fears and Troubles, and with both Hands draw Calamity on themselves, because *they forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water.* All Creature-comforts are at best but Cisterns, and when too much loved, but broken Cisterns, in which are no Waters of true Consolation to be found; *Jerem.* 2. 13. To seek Content here, in any thing out of God, and beneath him, is to seek the Living among the Dead: The Work of Faith is, to look upwards, to look within the Veil, to look to Jesus, *Mic.* 7. 7.

The right and ready way to present Peace is, looking stedfastly (not to present things, but) to that future Rest and Happiness, to the full enjoyment of God in Heaven. Thus our Lord takes off his Disciples from their Heart-trouble, *John* 14. 1, 2. of which Text I have written a Discourse at large.

Let us consider how this *looking unto those eternal things* is expressed: 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. it is, loving the *appearance* of Christ: *Tit.* 2. 13. *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. 1 *Cor.* 1. 7. 2 *Cor.* 5. 2, 3. *Rom.* 8. 23. *waiting, hoping, hastening unto, groaning after* that Glory.

Who-

Whoever meets with a diſtreſſed, diſconſolate, complaining Chriſtian, you ſhall find, that one or both of theſe things is manifeſt in him; either he hath low Expectations from God hereafter, or he hath high Expectations from the Creature here; either he looks too much on things viſible and temporal, or too little on things inviſible and eternal; and indeed, he that doth the one doth the other; for, the too much minding *viſible temporal things*, hinders the true minding of *inviſible eternal things*.

If we examine matters aright in our own Souls, we ſhall find, that this is the main thing that begets in us, and keeps us under, ſo many Troubles and Diſquiets; either, that we do not, or will not ſeriouſly and believingly engage our Hearts and Minds in the meditation, conſideration, and application of *all* thoſe great and glorious things, which God hath promiſed, and which Chriſt hath purchaſed; or elſe we *will* needs mind and expect what God hath not promiſed, nor Chriſt purchaſed, a total freedom from Troubles, Sickneſſes, Loſſes, &c. God hath no where promiſed, nor hath Chriſt purchaſed it: and then we complain, when we miſs of our groundleſs Expectations.

Either we are ſtill poring and thinking on our Creature-comforts and Enjoyments, and looking for much from them and in them, much comfort, help, ſweetneſs, ſatisfaction, reſpect, kindneſs, from them; or elſe we are grieving and mourning for the loſs and want of them; all which thoughts do but ſowre, imbitter, wound and weaken our Spirits; or elſe we do but too ſeldom think of the infinite Goodneſs, Love, Mercy, Tenderneſs, All-ſufficiency of God and Chriſt, and of the Glory of Heaven; which Thoughts would ſweeten, alleviate, and mi-

tigate our Sorrows, and help much to ſupport our Spirits under *all* our Afflictions.

We are grieved and troubled for Loſſes and Croſſes, for loſs of Relations, for Sickneſs and Pains, Diſappointments, Unkindneſſes of Friends, Diſeſteem in the World, *&c.* Let us conſider, whether God hath promiſed, or Chriſt purchaſed any Freedom from thoſe: Have any of the Saints been freed from thoſe? And why ſhould we expect to be free? But if we make Promiſes to our ſelves, and then our own Promiſes deceive us, whom can we blame for that?

Nay, do we not, as it were, neceſſitate God hereby, to imbitter *all* our Earthly Comforts to us, and to make every Creature a Scorpion to us, becauſe we will make them our *Gods?* We have leſs Comfort in them than we might have, becauſe we would have more in them than we ſhould: We might have more kindneſs from Friends, more ſweetneſs in our Relations, *&c.* if we looked for leſs.

Scarce any Comfort we have, but one time or other becomes a Scourge to us, becauſe we fooliſhly made it an Idol to us. *Iſa.* 2. 22. *Ceaſe ye from man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, for wherein is he to be accounted? Jer.* 17. 5, 6, 7. We can never expect ſo little from the Creature, but we ſhall be ſure to find leſs than we looked for: But ſuch is the Goodneſs of God to his People, that we can never expect ſo much from him, but we ſhall be ſure to find more.

The

The Application.

First, *For Information.*

1. If the serious minding of, and believing looking unto invisible eternal things, will much support Christians under the Troubles of this Life, it follows then, that there is a great necessity that Christians should have a distinct saving knowledg of invisible eternal things, for without such a knowledge of them, they cannot mind them, nor set their Hearts upon them. *John* 17. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* *Col.* 2. 2, 3. We know those things but confusedly, and therefore we mind them but confusedly. This Saving Knowledge is a New Covenant-Mercy: God promiseth that his People *shall be all taught* of him, and that *they shall all know the Lord*; *Jer.* 31. 33, 34. *John* 6. 45. *Eph.* 4. 21. Our Duty is then, to lay hold on God's Covenant, and humbly to beseech him to teach us by his Spirit, and to enlighten our Understandings; as *Paul* prays, *Eph.* 1. 17, 18.

2. Hence appears the Necessity of Faith, and full perswasion of the verity, reality, and excellency of those *invisible eternal things.* It is a full perswasion of a Better Good than the Creature, and of a Better Countrey, of a Better Substance, of a Better Place than this World is, and of Better Company, Better Friends than can be enjoyed here, that will make us set our Thoughts on work upon them, and that will support under the loss of those worse things.

While we have those better things in our Eye, we shall not be much troubled about the worse; the better will *swallow* up the worse, if we firmly and heartily believe them, and have good ground to hope, through Grace, that we have Title to them; as *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. The belief of a better Resurrection, and of a better Life than this, *will* support us under the Troubles of this: *Heb.* 11. 35.

3. Then there is also a necessity lies on us of having an Interest in those invisible eternal good things; in God, in Christ, in the Promises, and in the Purchased Inheritance. An absolute necessity lies on us all, of getting an interest in Jesus Christ, Real Union with him, for only hereby we come to have an Interest in *all* those eternal Blessings: If Christ be ours, *All* is ours; not else. 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

Oh, this, this is the one thing necessary, That we make sure our Interest in God, and in his Covenant by Jesus Christ: This, and this alone, will *ballance all our Losses.* Take special notice of those two Texts, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.

Let us try our Interest in Christ by those few Scriptures, *Rom.* 8. 1, 9. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new Creature; all old things are past away; behold, all things are become new.* Gal. 5. 24. *They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.* Gal. 2. 20. *Christ liveth in me.*

4. Hence we may know the true cause and ground of Discouragement and Despondency under our Troubles, to wit, our want of Faith in, and

and our not minding of eternal inviſible things. They that believe not the Crown, can never comfortably bear the Croſs: The way to forget our Miſery, is ſeriouſly and believingly to remember and conſider our Felicity. *Rom.* 8. 17. *The ſufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us.*

Our Burdens would not be ſo heavy as they are, if our Hearts were more heavenly than they are: If we could get more above, and converſe more with God, our Troubles would not be ſo troubleſome as they are. *Nil ſentit in Nervo, cum anima ſit in Cælo.* Oh, let us pray for more acquaintance with God, and thereby good, all good, ſhall come unto us. Let us cry out with the Divine Poet,

O ſhew thy ſelf to me,
Or take me up to thee.

Converſe with God and Chriſt will ſweeten every bitter Cup, and lighten every heavy Burden.

5. Hence alſo we may inferr the Neceſſity of Patience under all our Afflictions, which are deſigned to prepare us for Glory, and that no otherwiſe, than as we do by Faith and Patience live in the expectation of that Glory. *Rom.* 2. 7. *To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life: Heb.* 10. 36. Unleſs we patiently bear our Troubles, they are not like to produce thoſe bleſſed effects; it is only through Faith and Patience that we inherit the Promiſes.

6. The Miſery of all Unbelievers then is very great, whatever they poſſeſs in this World, for they muſt needs meet with Troubles alſo in this Life, and muſt meet with the King of Terrors at laſt;

laſt: And what poſſibly can ſupport them, having no intereſt in God and Chriſt, and no good grounds of hope, that they ſhall enjoy thoſe inviſible eternal good things hereafter? Part they muſt with all viſible temporal good things, and that for ever, and cannot look on God, and Glory, and Heaven as theirs, becauſe not regenerated, not united to Chriſt, not effectually called: ſurely their caſe is moſt ſad, for then alſo all their vain hopes and groundleſs confidences *ſhall* periſh.

7. The miſchief of Earthly-mindedneſs alſo appears hence: Inordinate minding earthly things, whether Friends or Foes, Eaſe or Pain, Loſs or Gain, &c. this very much hinders our Comfort and Support: Oh, pray againſt it, watch againſt it.

Now to take us off from this inordinate minding of theſe Earthly things, let us take theſe Helps.

1. Let us urge and preſs the expreſs Command of *God* upon our Hearts, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *Set your affections upon things above, and not upon things below.* Let this ſway with us: It is as much our Duty as any other, and there is as much Divine Authority in this Command as in any other, and as much of the Power of Religion and Truth of Grace lies in the Practice of this, as of any other Duty; and by the conſciencious performance of this Duty, we do as much evidence the ſincerity of our Love and Obedience, as by any other.

2. If we be true Chriſtians, we are of an high, noble, heavenly extraction and original, begotten and born of *God*; *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. *John* 3. 3, 5. born from above, Heaven-born, therefore we ſhould mind heavenly things. As is the heavenly, ſuch are they that are heavenly. 3. If

3. If we be true Christians, we have an invisible eternal Life in us; Christ is our Life, and our Life is hid with Christ in God; *Col.* 3. 3, 4. We have invisible eternal Principles of Life in us, Christ formed in our Hearts: *Phil.* 4. 19. The incorruptible Seed of God in us, the Spirit of Jesus in us, the Divine Nature in us; all which dispose and encline us to look upwards, and to mind invisible and eternal things.

4. Your Hopes are grounded and fixed on invisible eternal things, 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *If our hope were only in this life, we should be of all men most miserable.* Our hopes are not here, we hope for what we see not; *Rom.* 5. 2. 2 *Pet.* 1. 13. 1 *John* 3. 3. It is invisible glory, the glory that is to be revealed at the Coming of Christ, *That when Christ shall appear, you may appear with him in glory, and may see him as he is, and may be like him.* You hope for infinitely better things than this World can afford; *Tit.* 2. 13, 14. *Phil.* 3. 21. You look for the Coming of *Jesus in glory, who shall make your vile bodies like unto his glorious body*; and then you that look for such things in Heaven, surely you should have your Conversations in Heaven.

5. Your Actings and Workings here in this life, are for invisible ends and purposes, not to be seen of Men, not to have your Reward here, but you seek Honour, and Glory, and Immortality, and Eternal Life; *Rom.* 2. 7, 8. Your sowing here is to reap Life everlasting; *Gal.* 6. 8. It is an invisible, incorruptible Crown, an everlasting Kingdom, an Heavenly Inheritance, that you are seeking: 1 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. You *labour not for that meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life*: *John* 6. 27. You are seeking *a City*

which

which hath foundations, and travelling home to *your Father's House*; therefore needs muſt your *thoughts and affections be ſet upon things above.*

6. Let us conſider, that all our beſt Friends and deareſt Relations are above, inviſible and unſeen to us here below. There is our Heavenly Father, there our dear Redeemer, ſitting at his right hand; there are all our pious Friends and dear Relations that dyed in Chriſt; there they are together praiſing and enjoying God.

7. If you be true Chriſtians, you have enlightned Minds, Eyes of Faith, Spiritual Underſtandings given you, to diſcern and apprehend thoſe inviſible eternal things; 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. you are ſpiritual perſons.

8. You eſteem, value, and love thoſe heavenly things moſt and beſt, if you be true Chriſtians; your Hearts are in Heaven, for there is your Treaſure; 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

9. You have inviſible Supports, Influences, and Experiences, a Well of Living Water ſpringing up in you, unto eternal life, *John* 4. 14. which no others but you have; and from thoſe ſpiritual Principles, which the Spirit of Chriſt plants in his People, good thoughts and heavenly Meditations are continually bred and fed.

10. You are in Heaven already, in Chriſt your Head; *Epheſ.* 2. 6. *Riſen with Chriſt:* And this Heavenly-mindedneſs the Apoſtle makes the true evidence of our being *riſen with Chriſt*; *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above: Set your affections on things above:* And it is the very diſtinguiſhing Character of one in Chriſt: *Rom.* 8. 1. *They that are in Chriſt, walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.*

Se-

Second *Use, by way of Exhortation to all Christians.*

Would you have sweet Support under all your Discouragements and sinking Troubles, then stedfastly and fixedly look upon *invisible eternal things*: Labour to live in the believing views and prospects of, and in a serious, hearty minding, and meditating upon *invisible eternal things*.

Oh, that we could draw off our Thoughts and Affections from *visible temporal things*, and that we would set them upon things above: Oh, what peace and Sweetness should we find in our Spirits?

Q. *But how shall we be able to do this?*

A. I. By looking to *God* in all our Mercies.
II. By resigning up our Wills to *God* in all our Miseries.
III. By aiming at Communion with *God*, and Conformity to him in all our Actions.

I. Let us look to *God* in all our Mercies. He is the God of our Lives, and of all the Comforts of Life: The power, vertue, and comfort of all created good, comes from the Created good, even GOD alone, for *in him we live, and move, and have our being*. This Health, Ease, Liberty, Relations, Rest, Sleep, that we have, and all those comfortable Accommodations that we enjoy, are from the Lord. It was truly said of one, That *many love the Creature, in opposition to God*; *Most* love it in competition with him, and almost *All* love the Creature in a way of separation from him. But more particularly let us labour, 1st, To

1ſt, To look unto, and acknowledge with Heart and Tongue, that our Heavenly Father in Chriſt is the Author and Giver of all the Mercies we enjoy. When we have Health, Eaſe, Liberty, Reſt, or any other Mercy, we ſhould look to him from whom they come, and to him through whom they come; we ſhould eye the hand of a Father, the heart and love of a Father, and conſider alſo, that all theſe Mercies come to us through the Blood of a Redeemer; this will make every morſel, every drop and crumb to be ſweet and pleaſant to us. A Dinner of green Herbs, Barley-bread, and cold Water, with the Love of God, will be ſweet.

Q. *But when ſhall we know, that we have theſe from the Love of God, and with the Love of God?*

Anſ. Then we may conclude, theſe outward Mercies come from the Love of God to us, when we are truly thankful for the leaſt Mercy we receive, and are ſtirred up to love God more, and to be more careful to ſerve, pleaſe, and truſt God the more.

Let us look thorough our viſible Comforts, to the inviſible giver of them, and to that eternal Love from whence they come; 1 *Chron.* 29. 12, 13, 16. It is our great evil, that we love the gifts of God for themſelves, and not for the giver of them: if we could ſee and taſte Divine love and goodneſs in our Relations, Health, Eſtate, &c. Oh, how ſweet would they be unto us? But this is our Folly and Fault, we overlook and forget God, and look no further than our viſible, ſenſible, temporal Comforts; even when we ſpeak of God with our Mouths, our Hearts are but too far from him: Our Hearts hang looſe from him, and lye

ye at too great a distance from him; our Hearts are not engaged with Love, and Desire, and Delight in him, nor enlarged after him, and so we miss the Comfort and Sweetness which we might find in him.

To delight in the God of Mercy more than in the Mercies of God, is a true Christian frame, and an high pitch of Grace, and a special way of enjoying sweet Communion with God; a thing wholly strange to most, and experienced but by few.

Q. *But how shall I know when I do this?*

Ans. 1. By real, practical, hearty acknowledgment and owning *God's* Propriety in all our Mercies. These Relations, Friends, this Health, Ease, Liberty, Safety, &c. these are all the Lords; as *Jacob* said, *Gen.* 33. 5. *These are the things that the Lord hath graciously given me.* We should always look on God as the proper owner of us and them; and all that we have, are but lent to us, and we are but Tenants at his will.

2. By labouring to draw up our Hearts and Loves to *God*, by those Mercies we receive from *God*, to make them as Cords and Bands of Love, to draw our Hearts nearer to God, and to bind our Hearts faster and closer to God by them; to make those Mercies as steps, to raise up our Souls higher towards God, in all the ways of obedience and holy confidence, we should pant and pray thus: "Oh, "that this Creature-comfort may draw my Heart "nearer to God, and not live as an Idol between "my Heart and God; oh, that this temporal "Blessing may raise my Heart some degrees "higher towards God; oh, that it may help me to

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" advance God more: Oh that it may not divide " my Heart from God, nor make me forgetful " of him, nor hinder me in my Duty to him; " but, oh that every Mercy I receive from God, " may endear God to me, and engage my Heart " more to him. Such pantings and breathings of Soul should be in us, then we shall enjoy God in our Mercies, and then they will be sweet unto us.

3. By laboring to use and improve all our Mercies for God; our Health, Ease, Liberty, Estate and all for God; to lay *all* out for his Service. If we have any Talent, let it be improved for God; if any Candle of Comfort lighted in our Habitation, let it burn for God; if any Ease after Pain, any Strength after Weakness, lay it out for God. Let us be thinking and studying what use and service we can put our Mercies to for God. Let us spend Time, Health, Strength, and all for God.

4. By labouring to be *willing* to part with all our outward Mercies when God calls for them.

As we should desire and wish for no Comfort otherwise, than as we may have it with the love of God, and as it may help us, and not hinder us in our way to God; so likewise, we should not desire the continuance of any outward Comfort, any longer than with the Love of God; and when he is pleased to call for them, *willingly* to surrender them to him: This is not to love any thing above God, nor in competition with him, nor in separation from him. 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *For he that loveth any thing in the world otherwise, the love of the Father is not in him.* And in so doing we evidence, that we love the God of Mercies more than the Mercies of God: And this way we may enjoy and maintain much sweet communion with God here in this

this Life; namely, by our hearty acknowledgment of God our Father in Christ, to be the Author of *all* our Mercies; looking to his Love in them; owning his Propriety in them all; making them as Cords of Love, to draw up our Hearts to God; using them for God, and willing to part with them at his call. This is to look to God in all our Mercies.

Secondly, Let us labour to look unto, and live upon God, in every Creature-comfort that we enjoy. Not only look unto God in our Mercies, as was said before in the other particular, but let us labour to ascend higher; and that is, let us labour and learn to live upon God and his Love in those Mercies.

Let this be minded by us: That it is not the Creature, but God in the Creature, that we must love and live upon. The Creature should not content us, without some sense of God's Love in it. If we have Health, Wealth, Liberty, Friends, we should put this Question to our selves; Do we enjoy God's Love with these? A great Question, yet seldom ask'd. It is surely the Love of God in a Mercy, that doth sanctifie and sweeten the Mercy to us; as is evident in that famous Instance of *Hezekiah*, *Isa.* 38. 17. *Thou hast in love to my soul delivered me from the pit of corruption.* Then Deliverance is sweet, when it comes from God's Love to our Souls.

Q. *But how may we know that?*

A. As *Hezekiah* did; *For*, saith he, *thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* When Pardon of Sin comes with a Mercy, 'tis a Mercy indeed, a double Mercy. Note, When a Soul-mercy comes with a Bodi-

Bodily Mercy, a Soul-mercy, with Ease, Recovery, &c. then that outward Mercy comes from the Love of God indeed. And thus many times our Lord Jesus distributed his Mercies in the days of his Flesh upon the Earth, healing Souls and Bodies together, forgiving their Sins, and curing their Diseases all at once.

Q. *But how shall we know that our Sins are forgiven as well as our Trouble removed?*

Ans. 1. When the Soul is stirred up to suitable praising of *God*, as in *Hezekiah*, so in *David*, *Psal.* 103. 1, 2, 3. the sense of *God*'s Mercies to them enlarged their Hearts with Thankfulness.

2. We may know that our Sins are forgiven us, if those Conditions are wrought in us, unto which forgiveness of Sins is promised, and those are chiefly Repentance and Faith: *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.* Acts 10. 43. *To him* (namely, to Jesus) *do all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.* Now, if after Mercies *God* gives us Hearts to repent and believe, we may certainly conclude that those Mercies come to us from the love of *God*.

We follow hard in our Prayers, and Desires, and Endeavours after earthly Mercies, when we want them; whereas our Souls should follow hard after *God* in them: *Psal.* 63. 8. & 31. 23. In every Ordinance, Priviledge, Duty, Providence, in every Enjoyment, it is the Love of God in it, that our Souls should thirst after; as *David* did, *Psal.* 63. 1, 2, 3, *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:*

So

so *Psal.* 84. 1. *Thee, thee, Lord, my soul longeth for.* He longed for God's Ordinances too, but chiefly, for God in them. So should we cry, "Health, "and Ease, and Liberty, and Deliverance with "thy self, Lord, and with thy Love: Peace and "Plenty with thy Love, Lord, not without it. "better be without these Mercies than without the Love of God in them: *Jude* 21. *Keep your selves in the love of God:* *Gal.* 2. 20. *Psal.* 62. 10. *If riches* (Friends, Ease, &c.) *encrease, set not your hearts on them,* but on God in them.

To look through, and beyond, and above a Mercy, unto the God of that Mercy, is a Mercy in that Mercy, and a choice one too; for none but *God's Chosen ones* can do it: And so to do, argues much Grace and much Communion with God. *Col.* 3. 1, 2. Let us look up, look up to *God* in *all* our Mercies: Stay not on the Mercy, be not content with the outward Mercy, for that is but the Shell, but look up to God, and long to see and taste his Love in it, for that is the Kernel, his Love in Christ; feed on that by Faith, Love, Meditation.

O, let us labour to have God in all our Thoughts; for, to look to, love, and live upon Creature-comforts meerly, barely, only, is but to live upon Husks, Ashes, Wind and Vanity; these are no Bread for the Soul; *Isa.* 55. 2. *Psal.* 143. 6. *I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land.*

When we taste and see the earthly Comforts we have, if we can also taste and see the Love of God in them, we enjoy a double sweetness, an outward and an inward, a visible and an invisible sweetness: Oh, what sweetness then may we taste? for both Faith and Sense are fed at once. And we

may

may further know, that any Mercy comes to us in Love, when our Souls are the better for that Mercy, more endeared to God, and more enlarged after God.

3. We must labour to use and enjoy *all* our Mercies for God, for his Honour and Service, as was hinted before. This is God's end in giving them, and it should be ours in using them. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* This great End should always be minded by us.

We should judge *all* that good that leads us nearer to God, and all that evil that draws us farther from him: *Prov.* 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himself.* We have lost most of our Comforts for want of this, to wit, our not enjoying them in *God*, and for *God*, and *God* in them: We feed on them, but not on *God* in them; and this provokes God to remove them, and to take away our best outward Mercies from us; even his Gospel, for our not using it, and not improving it for God, and for contenting our selves barely with it, without *God* in it: Bare Ordinances, bare Duties, without God in them, are but dry Breasts, without Milk, which Souls may lye upon all their days, and starve and perish notwithstanding, if they meet not God in them.

But now, if we thus eye and look unto *God*, and seriously mind the invisible eternal *God*, we shall hereby be sweetly supported under all our Troubles. For,

1*st*, This will take out the gall and wormwood of our Troubles, which is our inordinate love of the Creature; for there is no immoderate Sorrow for the loss of any thing, but of that which was inordinately loved: So that if *God* had had our

Hearts

Hearts and Affections, when we had our Creature-Comforts, he will have them much more when they are removed; for God remains the same still, every way as full, and as All-sufficient to supply and support us: So that if we had lived upon *God the Fountain* when we had the *Cisterns*, we shall live more immediately upon him when the *Cisterns* are broken, and shall then have our Comforts more pure, and more refreshing.

And this is not all; but if we be truly gracious, it will grieve us to the very Heart, when our earthly Comforts are gone, that we set our Hearts so much upon them, that we minded and loved them so much, and lived so much upon them, and that we lived so little upon God in them, and enjoyed so little of God and his Love in them; and this will be the Sting and Burthen of our Souls then. But now, to live on God and his Love in our Enjoyments, will prevent this *Trouble of Troubles*, and support us under all our *Troubles*, because our God, and his Love, which we lived upon before, remain still. God is everlasting, and his Love unchangable. The Foundation remains; the Spring of all our Mercies remains. But, woe and alas! what Strangers are we to this living upon God, and his Love in Christ? *David* lived entirely upon God, *Psal.* 73. 24, 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

2dly, By this we may begin our *Heaven upon Earth* out of *Heaven*, even in the Hell of the Troubles and Miseries of this World; for this is the very *Happiness of Heaven*, to be continually with God, and to *live* upon God, *that God may be all in all*,

all, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. This is Heavens Happiness, to live upon that infinite Fountain of goodness, and to live with God. And so far as we can thus live upon God by Faith, Love, Meditation, Holy Confidence and Dependance, Holy Resignation of our selves and all our concerns to him, so far we are entred into Heaven, and Heaven is entred into us already: *The kingdom of Heaven is within you*, said our Lord. And, what support will this be to us in all our Afflictions!

3*dly*, This is the way to lose nothing of all our Earthly Comforts; for, what we lose in the Creature, we shall find in the Creator. If we enjoyed God in the Creature, in Relations, Friends, Estate, Liberty, Health, &c. we may enjoy him as well when these Creature-comforts are gone, and it may be better than before, for the Fountain it self is purer than the Streams.

All the little good, the small comfort, the slender and short satisfaction, the little mixed sweetness, that we have in or from any Creature, comes not from the Creature it self, distinct from God, for then all that enjoy the Creature would have that Comfort and Content, the *bad* as well as the *good*; which we know is not so; for many have had large *Portions* of the best of the Creatures, that have had no comfort or contentment in them: *Solomon* himself is a Witness.

But that very little Comfort or Content that any one hath in the Creature, it is distilled and derived to him through the Creature from God, and from him alone. If God put sweetness into any Creature-comfort, and bless it to us, it shall be sweet to us: If He convey any goodness or content to us through any Creature-chanel, we shall have it, not else: But if he put bitterness into any Creature-comfort, and

and with-hold his Blessing, it will yield us no content at all.

This is a most experienc'd Truth, That it is *God*'s Love, his Blessing in a Mercy, that is *The Mercy*; and it is that only which brings any Comfort or Content to us that have it.

What Content had *Ahab* in his Kingdom, or *Haman* in his Honour? Surely none at all. *Prov.* 10. 22. *The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.* The *Blessing of the Lord maketh* the Poor in this World *rich*, and with this Blessing *comes no Sorrow*, as there doth with all other Blessings. This is the Blessing that goes with *The Blessing*, the inward Blessing that goes with the outward Blessing, whether little or much, the love of *God* is in it to his People; and that maketh rich, that contents the Soul, and yields sweetness to it; and this Contentment is the Blessing, without which *Godliness* it self is not *Gain*. Now, when the outward Blessing is gone, the Creature-blessing gone, the inward Blessing may be continued; the Love of *God*, and inward Contentment may be continued; when the Cabinet is worn out, the Jewel may be as good as ever: And if this continue with us, namely, the Blessing which is the Love of God, if that remain towards us, when the outward Blessing is taken away, we have no cause of Disquietment. But this remains always to the true Christian; for it is *God*'s Covenant, which cannot be broken. *Psal.* 89. 34, 35. *My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: My covenant will I not break*, &c.

Oh, that we could look more at the invisible eternal Blessing, the sure Mercies of *David*, in *all* our outward Blessings, which remains when all the

visible temporal things are gone. Yea, further, this invisible everlasting Blessing doth not only remain with us, when all other Blessings are gone, but (which is wonderful) then, even then, our everlasting Father doth usually communicate and manifest more of his Love (which is the Blessing indeed) to the Souls of his People, than when they had the enjoyment of their outward Blessings. When had *Ezekiel* and *John* such glorious Visions of *God*, but in Captivity and Exile? When *God* brings his People into the Wilderness, then he *speaks comfortably unto them*, then he speaks to their Hearts, *Hos.* 2. 14. as in the Wilderness, in the absence of Creature-comforts, the Spouse leans on her Beloved, *Cant.* 8. 5. fixeth her Loves and Desires most intimately and heartily upon him; so, even then, her Beloved manifests most of his tender love to her; and when the World frowns, he smiles upon her.

So that this *looking up to God in all our Enjoyments*, living upon Him, and enjoying all in him, and for him, will wonderfully support us under all our Trouble, because by this means we shall lose nothing, but what we lose in the Stream, we shall find in the Fountain; what we want in the Creature, we shall find in God; yea, and in all our losses for Christ and his Truths, we are assured to have an hundred fold; *Matth.* 19. 29.

So much for the first Counsel, *Look to God in all our Enjoyments.*

II. The second Counsel: *Resign up your wills entirely to the will of God in all your Afflictions.* It is an Argument of an excellent Spirit, when all Self-respects are drowned in the Will of God, and there is

is nothing loſt therein, for our beſt ſafety is in the Will of God; our Happineſs is more in God than in our ſelves, and His Will is infinitely better than ours.

We may be ſure of this, that a man ſhall never have ſetled Peace and Comfort, until he have cordially committed and reſigned up all his Will and Way, all his Concerns, and Intereſts, and Ends to the holy Will of God. *Pſal.* 37. 5, 7. *Commit thy way unto the Lord: truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs. Reſt in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* Prov. 16. 3. *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.*

It is the difference of Wills, Ends, and Intereſts that begets all the Stirs and Troubles in the Hearts of Men. GOD will have his Will, and Man will have his: It is the communion of Wills, Hearts, Intereſts, and Ends, that is that *fellowſhip* that a Creature hath with its Creator.

It is the Intereſt and Honour, the Dignity and Duty, the Comfort and Quiet, the Heaven and Happineſs of a Rational Creature to be what God will have him be, to do what God will have him do, to want what God will have him want, and to ſuffer what God will have him ſuffer; to be *wholly* at the diſpoſe of God, as our Lord was; *Not my will, but thine be done.*

This is true Chriſtianity indeed, true *Self-denial*, *Matt.* 16. 24. To be no more our own, nor at our own diſpoſe, but to be entirely at the Will of God, is the way to true Comfort: *Pſal.* 142. 5. *Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.*

Now, if we would thus look unto the invisible God, and resign up our wills to his will in all things, in order to our support and comfort in all our Afflictions, we must *carefully* observe these things:

1*st*, We must really look unto, and heartily own God's absolute Dominion over, and his Propriety in *all* things: He is the Lord and Owner of all his Works; *Job* 9. 12. *He taketh away, who can hinder him? who durst say to him, What doest thou?* Isa. 45. 9. He is the Potter, we are the Clay; He is the Creator of all things, and therefore the true, only, and rightful Owner of all things: *Ezek.* 18. 4. *All souls are mine*, saith God; and all Creatures are his. *Hos.* 2. 9. And we are none of our own, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. Whether as Creatures or Christians, our Souls, Bodies, Goods, *all* are God's, upon *all* accounts: If we did not look on those earthly Comforts too much as our own, we should not grieve too much for the loss of them.

Now, we own God's Dominion and Propriety in all things, when we *thankfully* receive any Creature-comfort from him, and silently submit to his disposse of them. *Psal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb*, saith *David*; and quietly surrender them up to God when he calls for them; as *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18.

2*ly*, We must really and heartily look unto and own God's Righteousness in all his Dispensations towards us, though never so hard, bitter, and pinching to the Flesh, yet God is righteous in all. *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation.* Dan. 9. 14. *Righteous art thou, O Lord.* Psal. 145. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

Now

Now we own God's Righteouſneſs in all our Afflictions, when we diligently enquire to find out the *why* and the *wherefore* of all God's dealings with us: We ſhould reaſon thus; The righteous God afflicts me; then certainly I muſt enquire after the Cauſe, and the End: *Lam.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch our hearts, and try our ways.* *God* is righteous, we have deſerved this Affliction. Hereupon we muſt ſearch for our Sins, confeſs them, hate them, turn from them; and then this Conſideration fetleth and ſatisfieth our Minds under God's correcting Hand: It is the righteous God that ſmites.

3*ly*, We muſt look unto and own the Faithfulneſs of God in his Chaſtiſements of us: When He blaſts our Earthly Hopes, kills our Creature-comforts, takes away our dear Relations, deprives us of Health, Eaſe, Liberty, Name, Eſtate; yet He is faithful; *Pſal.* 119. 75. *In faithfulneß thou haſt afflicted me.* *God* hath put chaſtiſement for Sin into his Covenant, *Pſal.* 89. 31, 33. and hath promiſed to with-hold no good thing from his People, *Pſal.* 84. 11. Now *God* ſees and knows that Chaſtiſements are good for his People, and ſhall work for their good, therefore in very faithfulneſs he doth correct them, to perform his Promiſe, and fulfil his Covenant. Oh, that we could ſeriouſly look to this Faithfulneſs of God, and believe, that while He is afflicting and chaſtiſing us, He is but making good his faithful Promiſes to us, it would mightily ſupport and uphold us: But this is our Unhappineſs, that in Affliction we are apt to judge the quite contrary, and to think rather that God is executing his Threatning upon us, and that breeds Trouble to us. Little do we think,

that when God ſtrips us of this or that outward Mercy, and lays his correcting Hand upon us, that now He is in all theſe Afflictions but performing his Promiſes to us, that He is doing us good by theſe, and accompliſhing all his ſweet, good, and gracious ends upon us; and that by theſe Afflictions He is preparing us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Oh, could we but believe this, and act our Faith upon *God*'s Faithfulneſs, it would help us cheerfully to bear all our Afflictions. *Lord, encreaſe our Faith.*

4*ly*, We muſt look unto and own the infinite Mercy and tender Compaſſions of the inviſible eternal *God*, in all our Afflictions: *God* is the *Father of Mercies*, a *God* of tender Mercies, of tender Bowels, *his Mercy endureth for ever*; His tender Mercies are over all his Works, and much more over his ſpecial Workmanſhip, his own Children, whom He hath begotten and formed for himſelf: He is *gracious and merciful*, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. Plenteous in Mercy; His Mercies are a great depth; Fury is not in Him towards his poor Children, *Iſa.* 27. 4. but Pity and Compaſſion; *Pſal.* 103. 13. *His Compaſſions fail not*, *Lam.* 3. 22, 23, 24. There is no revengeful Paſſion in the moſt holy God; it is He that puts Bowels of Mercy and Compaſſion into his Creatures, and then ſurely He is full of Mercy himſelf: He is *rich in mercy*, and of *great love*, *Epheſ.* 2. 4. and full of Mercy. *The Lord taketh pleaſure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy*, *Pſal.* 147. 11. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his Mercy*, Pſal. 33. 18. Let us act Faith on the Mercy of *God.*

5*ly*, We

5*ly*, We must look unto and own the Omnipotency and All-sufficiency of the invisible eternal *God*, *Gen.* 17. 1. *I am the almighty God*, Rev. 1. 8. The only Creator of all things out of nothing; He can create Salvation and Deliverance; *Isa.* 4. 5. & 57. 19. *God* being All-sufficient, can never be at a loss, nor to seek of ways to help his People in distress. He hath infinite ways of his own for helping us, either immediately from himself, or by raising up other means (and those it may be very unlikely, yea, contrary) to deliver us. God is most honoured by us when we see nothing, but rather all contrary to that we look for, Refuge failing, Friends, Flesh, Heart failing, then, to shut our Eyes to all Creature-helps, and look altogether on *God's All-sufficiency*, and only relye on that. God can convey himself more comfortably to us, when He pleaseth, without means, than by means.

This our eying and owning God's Almightiness and All-sufficiency, will work in us an *holy awe* and *filial fear* of Him: Who would not fear such a God? *Luke* 12. 5. And also it will breed an holy confidence in him: *Psal.* 9. 10. *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* "O my Soul, look "up to *God's All-sufficiency*, He can in a moment "turn thy Darkness into Light, thy Sorrow into "Joy; He can make dry Bones live; He that "breaks can bind up; He that takes can give.

This is the best way to glorifie *God* in the day of our Visitation; to trust in him, and relye upon him; though He kill all our Comforts, yet to believe He can supply, He can provide; as said *Abraham*, so *Psal.* 107. 33, 35. Whatever our case be,

let us take heed that we deſpond not, nor caſt away our confidence, but reſt upon *God's All-ſufficiency. Truſt in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength,* Iſa. 26. 2, 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee.*

Ely, Let us eye and own the infinite Wiſdom of the inviſible eternal God: He that ſends and orders all our Afflictions, is the Wiſe God, the Only-wiſe God, the very Fountain of all Wiſdom; 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. He ſhews his Wiſdom not only in his general Providence governing the whole World, but in all his ſpecial Providences towards his People, and that in reſpect of their Afflictions. For,

1. *God* knows beſt how to order our Afflictions to us, and that (1.) as to Time, when to ſend them; (2.) as to Kind, what ſort of Affliction to ſend; (3.) as to Meaſure, how much to ſend; (4.) as to Duration, how long to continue them: *Rev.* 2. 10. and to what end and purpoſe. He is a moſt wiſe God.

2. He knows beſt how to ſupport and comfort his People under *all* their Afflictions, and when to comfort them; He knows their Frame; He knows their Souls in Adverſity; He knows their Need and their Strength; and hath regard to all this. 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. *He is the God of all conſolation.*

3. He knows beſt when to deliver; even then, when it ſhall make moſt for his own glory, and his Peoples greateſt good; 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. and ſurely that muſt be the beſt time.

4. He

4. He knows best how to make Afflictions work most for our good; how to bless them, and to make them Blessings to us, that we may have cause to bless him for them.

Now, we eye and own the Wisdom of God in our Afflictions, when by the consideration of it we are kept from maligning and fretting at the Instruments or Causes of our Afflictions, saying in our Hearts and Tongues, *Let* Shimei *curse, let Enemies persecute and plunder, &c.* All these are but Swords, Staffs, Rods in our most wise and loving Father's Hand: These Losses, Sicknesses, *&c.* do but execute the Will and Wisdom of *God*; and when we make no haste to get out of our Troubles, nor use any unlawful means, but quietly and contentedly referr all to the *Holy Will* and *Wisdom* of *God*; and when we can wait with Patience upon God, and stay his time, and hope in Him only for an happy issue; resigning up our *Wills* to his *Will* and *Wisdom*, to do with us, to dispose of us, and of all our Comforts, as He pleaseth: By so doing we shall be sweetly supported under *all* our Troubles. "Lord God, of thy abundant Grace, "and by thy Almighty Power, work in us this "blessed frame, and keep us in it *till Death*, that "thou maist be glorified by us.

7*ly*, and lastly, Let us eye and own the love and goodness of God in *all* our Afflictions: We are apt to look mostly to the Anger and Displeasure of God in our Troubles, which indeed we ought to be sensible of, and deeply affected with, because we have sinned against Him, and therefore ought we patiently to bear the effects of his indignation, *Mic.* 7. 9. and to humble our selves under his mighty Hand, to *repent of*, and *turn from our evil*

ways, *Lam.* 3. 40. This we muſt do, but this is not *all* our Duty; but we muſt alſo look up to the love of God, and to his goodneſs, from which our Afflictions come; *Pſal.* 89. 33. *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth:* Pſal. 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.*

For, as our Afflictions have a bad Cauſe, as bad as may be, even our Sins. *Lam.* 3. *Wherefore doth the living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?* Yet they proceed from a good Root, even the Love of God: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten,* ſaith our loving Lord Jeſus, *Rev.* 3. 19. He loves when he takes, as well as when he gives. He takes in love; and this believed and conſidered, will very much ſweeten every bitter Cup: The believing conſideration, that the love of our Father, the love of the Mediator is in every Affliction; that every Cup that comes to us, paſſeth firſt through his Hands, who loved us, and gave himſelf for us, (for through him are *all* things) this conſideration will ſupport us: *Lord, encreaſe our Faith.*

So much of the ſecond Counſel, *viz. To reſign up our Wills to the Will of God in all our Miſeries.*

III. The laſt Counſel to Chriſtians, in order to their ſupport and comfort in their Afflictions, is this:

Aim at *Communion with God,* and *Conformity to him in all your Actions:* Look unto the inviſible eternal God, and labour for Communion with him, and conformity to him. It is conformity to God that fits us for communion with him. The more conformity to him, to his holy Nature, and to his

his holy Will, the more communion we shall have with him; and the more we are like him, the more will he manifest himself unto us; and the more we obey him, the more fellowship we shall have with him. *John* 14. 21, 23.

And also, the more communion we have with him, & the more communications we have from him, the more conformable we shall be to him, and the more we shall be like him; 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. Communion with God will transform and change us into his Image more and more; and the more we have of his Image, the more pleasure will he take in us, and the more delight will he take to communicate himself to us. The more holy, heavenly, humble, meek, patient, loving, merciful, peaceable we are, the more like him we are; and the more we are like him, the more of his *love* and *likeness* will he continually work in us, and manifest unto us. This is the Life of true Religion; this is to live the Life of *God*, to live in communion with him, panting and longing after constant Influences and Communications of his Life, Spirit, Love, Grace, Peace, and Comfort from him; and giving up, surrendring up of our *Hearts* and *Souls* to him, spending our best thoughts, desires, affections, hopes, trust, joy, and delight upon him.

Always minding, that it is God in Christ that we must thus look unto and mind, in *all* these particulars; God in Christ, not God singly considered, but *God* in *Christ*; for, *God* cannot be comfortably thought upon out of *Christ* our Mediator, in *whom alone he is well pleased*: No Communion with *God*, but in *Christ*; no Communication of any good from *God* to us, but in *Christ*, and by his Spirit. It is the invisible eternal God by the invisible

eternal Son of *God*, and through the invisible eternal Spirit, that we must make *all* our Addresses unto, and expect *all* Communications of good from.

It is *Christ* alone that must bring *God* and the *Soul* together: In *Christ* we are reconciled to him, even by the Blood of his Cross; 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *Col.* 1. 20. And being reconciled to *God* by him, we have Peace with *God*, and then have Communion with him.

In Christ, *God*'s Nature becomes lovely to us, and ours to *God*, otherwise there is an utter Enmity betwixt his pure and our impure Nature. *Christ* hath made up the vast gulf between *God* and *us*; *He drank of the brook in the way*, *Psal.* 110. last.

Aim at, and thirst after Communion with *God* in *Christ*, in all your receipts of Mercies from him, and in all your returns of Duty to him: Pray and pant, that all that you receive from him may come to you from his Love in Christ. Oh, that this Mercy, that this Affliction, may proceed from God's Fatherly Love in Christ Jesus! so in all your Approaches to God, in Ordinances and Duties, pray and pant after Communion with God in Christ; Oh, that I may meet with God in this Ordinance, and in this Duty! without which we should not be satisfied in any.

Ordinances and Duties, and all outward Blessings, are but visible temporal things; we must look beyond them and above them, unto God in Christ, for the invisible eternal love, and grace, and blessing of God in them. So holy *David*, *Psal.* 63. 1. 2, 3. *That I may see thy power and thy glory*, saith he. And Vers. 8. *My soul followeth hard after*

ther God; to see God's power, and love, and grace in Ordinances. So *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.* This is the marrow and fatness of God's Ordinances, and this is that will satisfie the Soul; therefore this is the thing that our Souls should long and breath after, that we may have sights, sweet sights of the invisible eternal God in Christ, in Ordinances and Duties, and tasts of his love and goodness in them.

And if we have Communion with God in our Mercies, we *shall* be able *thankfully* to receive them and *fruitfully* to improve them for God: And also, we shall be enabled patiently and comfortably to bear *all* our Afflictions, and profitably to improve them.

Now, if we would have Communion with God in Christ, we must look well to these things, *viz.*

1*st*, We must *labour to be pure in Heart*, for such as are pure in Heart, and *they only*, *shall see God*; God in his Son, God in his Ordinances, in his Providences, and in Glory at last. If we regard Iniquity in our Hearts, God will not hear our Prayers, nor afford us any Communion with him. *Mat.* 5. 8. A pure Heart is a new Heart, an Heart purged by the Blood of Christ from the guilt of Sin, and purified by his Spirit; *Acts* 15. 9. An Heart renewed and sanctified; a single, sincere, and upright Heart, that hath pure Principles planted in it, the Spirit of God, the Fear of God, the Love of God, Faith in God and Christ, Christ formed there, the Image of God stamped there, the Kingdom of God set up there: These are the true Principles of Purity of Heart and Life; and also an Heart set and bent by the Rules of God's

God's pure Word, that pure Rule; and that acteth for pure ends to please God, to bring Glory to him, to do good to others, and to enjoy God in our Salvation: Such may expect sweet Communion with God, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16, 17. the Lord God Almighty *will walk and dwell with such.*

2*ly*, We must labour to be poor in Heart, poor in Spirit, *Mat.* 5. 3. broken in Heart, contrite in Spirit, *Isa.* 57. 15. O, the wonderful condescension of the high and lofty one, who dwelleth in the Heavens! that He should stoop so low, as to dwell in the broken Heart, to revive such Hearts, such Spirits; O, the Revivings of God, they are Soul-satisfying things: The Consolations of God are not small: Happy indeed are those Souls in whom the great and glorious God dwells; blessed Souls that are the Temple of the holy God, Habitations of God by the Spirit; 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. *Eph.* 2. 22. *Isa.* 66. 2. To the man will God look that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit; and God's looks on such are sweet looks, Love-looks; such shall have much communion with God and Christ, for Christ was sent to bind up the *broken hearted*, *Luke* 4. 18.

What a comfortable support is this to a poor afflicted Christian, that is poor in this World, destitute of Friends and earthly Comforts, restrained and shut up in Prison, or otherwise confined to Chamber or Sick-bed, and withal, is *poor in Spirit*, is content in this condition? Yet now, in this his desolate condition, he may have Communion with the great God; he may enjoy the blessed and sweet Company of the Lord Jesus by day and by night, even when Lover and Friends is far from him; even then his God is near him, his everlasting Fa-

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ther is with him, his dear Lord and Redeemer, his sweet Saviour and loving Husband is with him; *Psal.* 25. 15, 16, 17. *Psal.* 102. 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. He will never leave them, nor forsake them.* Yea, he will then speak most comfortably to their poor souls, *Hos.* 2. 14. He will speak to their Hearts; he knows their Souls best in Adversity, and their souls know him best then: Jesus Christ will then shew them his Love, and manifest it unto them, and support them.

3*ly*, If we would have Communion with God in every condition, we must labour to be upright in Heart: *Psal.* 125. The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon him in truth; they shall have Communion with him: *He loveth truth in the* inner parts; *He that walketh uprightly shall dwell in God's tabernacle*, and abide in his holy hill, *Psal.* 15. 1,2. God hates *Hypocrisie:* Oh, the guile and falshood of our hearts, let us bewail it, and cry to God with *David*, *Make my heart sound in thy statutes.*

4*ly*, Be heavenly in heart, be heavenly-minded; such shall have sweet Communion with *God*; such as have their *Conversation in Heaven*, have converse with God, *Phil.* 3. 20. We must be very watchful, that the World do not lye too near our hearts, nor lodge too long in our hearts, for that will steal away our hearts from God, and hinder our Communion with him: We must take heed, that our hearts be not at any time over-charged with the Cares of this Life, but let us labour to keep the *World* and our *Hearts* asunder; for those things that are visible and temporal, will darken our sight of God, if we let them into our hearts; and they will drive God out of our hearts,

if we entertain the inordinate love of them.

Covetousness is Idolatry, because it sets up the Creature for a God in the Heart; 1 *John* 2. 14,15. *He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Keep a strong Watch then against this present evil World, and suffer it not to get into your Hearts, if you will maintain your Communion with *God* in *Christ*.

5*ly*, Be much in the acting of Faith, Love, Hope, Joy in the Lord: Be much in praising *God*: By the exercises of these graces we enjoy *God*, and *God* communicates himself to us. Oh, labour to live in the lively exercise of Faith: Christ dwells in the Heart by Faith; *Eph.* 3. 17. *Gal.* 2. 20. Labour to believe the Love of *God* in *Christ* to your Souls, in giving his Son to be a Sin-offering for us: *John* 3. 16. 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. And this believing it will warm and enflame your Hearts with Love to God again, and so you may enjoy much sweet Communion with *God* and *Christ*; *John* 14. 21, 23.

In the Actings of our Love to *God* we shall meet with more Manifestations of *God's* Love to us. Where and when we open our Hearts to *God* and *Christ*, and give them our Loves, there and then will *God* and *Christ* open their Hearts to us, and give us their Loves; *Cant.* 1. 2, 3. & *Cant.* 7. 10, 11. There is a mutual Manifestation of Love to each other; no Love is lost between Christ and his Spouse: *If any man open to me,* (saith Christ) *I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me*; *Rev.* 3. 18. Now, by the exercise of Faith and Love, we open to Christ; he is always ready to come in: *Open your everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in*, Ps. 24.

6*ly*, Be

6*ly*, Be very watchful: Watch, and *keep your hearts with all diligence*, *Prov.* 4. 23. Take heed; let not the World nor Vain Thoughts lodge there. Take heed of wandring from *God*; watch your words, watch your steps; take heed, grieve not, quench not, resist not the Holy Spirit, for by him *God* communicates himself to your Souls; carefully observe all his Motions, and still beg his assistance in all your Duties, and rest upon his Aid, without which you can do nothing.

7*ly*, And lastly, If we would maintain our Communion with God, (which is our *Heaven upon Earth*) we must look well to our whole Conversation, that that be ordered aright, for to such *God will shew his salvation*, Psal. 50. 23. *God* looks for a well-order'd Conversation, a Life order'd by the Rule of his Word, setting narrow Steps to our Feet, looking straight on, *not turning aside to the right or left hand*, Prov. 4. 25, 26, 27. nor *wickedly departing from his way*, Psal. 18. 21, 22, 23. but to be righteous, just, honest, faithful, upright, charitable in all our dealings with Men, and carefully performing all our Duties to GOD and Man in singleness and integrity of Heart. This is a well-order'd Conversation.

Also, in our Conversation, we must mind two things:

1. That we have no fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, *Ephes.* 5. 11. that is, no more than need; no intimate Familiarity and Communion with them, lest thereby we lose our Communion with God; no more Communion with the Wicked than Piety, Charity, and Ne-

Neceſſity will allow. Too many have loſt Communion with GOD, by their too intimate Communion with the Wicked. *Away from me,* ſaith holy *David, all ye workers of iniquity.*

2. That we break not Fellowſhip with, nor withdraw Communion from the People of God, from thoſe that bear his Image, although differing from us in ſome circumſtances. In the Communion of Saints we may have Communion with God; *Pſal.* 16. 2. God is among his People, he walks in them, and dwells in them. Our Love muſt be not only to thoſe of our own Opinion, but to all Saints and profeſſing Chriſtians, and muſt hold Communion with all thoſe with whom we may charitably judge, that Chriſt holds Communion; were this well minded, it would do much to heal our ſad and ſinful Breaches; *Heb.* 10. 24, 25.

And thus we have ſeen, how that our looking unto inviſible eternal things, eſpecially unto God in Chriſt, and maintaining our Communion with them, we may be ſweetly born up, and comfortably ſupported under all our Troubles.

O *Moſt holy, moſt merciful, moſt gracious Lord God, Father Almighty, and my moſt loving and tender-hearted Father in my moſt dear and ſweet Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt; I render Thee my moſt humble and hearty Thanks and Praiſe, for length-*

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ding my days, and for supporting me with thy Special Goodness, in this poor Work; for giving me sometimes hours, sometimes half-hours, and sometimes days of some Strength and Ease, between those many sad and painful Distempers upon me, since I began it. And I most humbly beseech thee to write these Truths on my Heart, and keep them there, that by the assistance of thy good Spirit they may be effectual to spiritualize, raise, and fix my poor, cold, dead, carnal Heart upon thy blessed Self in Christ; and be pleased to vouchsafe me sweet, sensible, and constant Communion with thy self in Christ, for thy Mercies sake, that thereby I may glorifie thee in this my day of thy Visitation, and may be throughly sanctified by, and comfortably supported under all my Troubles. Amen.

TO

TO ALL MY

Chriſtian Friends

IN

DARTMOUTH,

Or elſewhere;

That deſire to know the true ſtate of their never-dying Souls: In order to their making clear and ſure their Intereſt in the *Lord Jeſus*; Grace and Peace.

BEfore I had finiſh'd the foregoing Treatiſe, there came to my hands, by *God's good Providence*, ſome Papers of very great concernment to all our Souls for Eternity, being the Concluſion of a Diſcourſe by that Eminent, Learned, and Pious Servant of the Lord Jeſus, Mr. *John Flavel*, whoſe Works praiſe him, and of whoſe Preſence and Labours, we that knew him by Face or Works, have continual cauſe to lament our Loſs; which Diſcourſe was from 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. con-

concerning Self-examination about a Man's Intereſt in Chriſt: Which Papers when I viewed and reviewed, I bleſs God, I felt ſo much power in the Contents of them, and ſo much ſweetneſs, that I thought not fit to eat my Morſe's alone, but was ſtrongly impreſt to make them publick, which here by the conſent of his dear Relations, I preſume to do, hoping it will awaken thoſe that did hear thoſe cloſe-trying Truths, to be more exact in their trying Work, and may alſo excite others to due diligence in that ſo profitable and too much neglected Duty of Self-examination. Thoſe Characters in this will help us againſt Self-deceiving: Do not read only, but pray earneſtly for the Spirit's help, and do no longer delay this Work, leſt thou be cut off before thy Work be done, and what will become of thee then? That this, with all other Helps to thy Soul in the way to Heaven, may do thee good, is the unfeigned Prayer of thy unfeigned Friend,

James Bardwood.

The Reverend Author having preached many profitable Sermons on the 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether you be in the Faith, &c.* in which he induſtriouſly and clearly ſhewed the neceſſity of Self-examination, the nature of the Duty conſiſting in a ſecret Debate of our eternal eſtate and conditions within our own Boſoms, wherein the Mind of a man ponders and weighs all that makes for him or againſt him, in an even Ballance. The Object-matter of this Debate is things eternal, the eternal concern-

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ments of his Soul, as likewiſe the manner of the performance of this Duty, with greateſt ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity ſetting the perfect Law of *God* before us, and humbly imploring the ſpecial Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit. Men are to debate theſe two things; 1*ſt*, Whether they are in Chriſt, or in the ſtate of Nature: a great Queſtion indeed, upon which hang all our Hopes of Heaven, *Chriſt in you the hope of glory*, *Col.* 1. 27. 2*dly*, If we be in Chriſt, what condition we are in, whether thriving in Grace, or decaying. In the firſt of theſe Queſtions the painful Author ſpent many Exerciſes in the reſolving of, in laying down, opening and anſwering eight ſeveral diſtinct Rules of Tryal of a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt, with the ſeveral Objections that poor doubting Souls might make againſt themſelves; things highly worth the publication, as I perceive by ſome imperfect Notes taken from him, which, becauſe I cannot attain to a more exact Copy of them, I muſt omit them, the more is the pity: But for the ninth and laſt Mark, I find more full and perfect, and therefore only offer this one to your conſideration, concerning which hear his own words.

As to this ninth Mark, of a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt, I have this to ſay, That if the Lord ſhall clear but this one Tryal, I do not value whatever Objections you have againſt any of the former: This will undoubtedly ſpeak your Souls Intereſt in the Lord Jeſus, without any more ado; and as far as the Lord ſhall clear it to you, you may venture your Souls into Eternity upon it.

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And therefore try your selves by this, if any of you be sincerely and fully resolved upon full conviction of your sinful and miserable state by Nature, and the answerableness of Christ to all your Wants; to let go all that hinders the enjoyment of him, and embrace all that furthers the enjoyment of him. You need not make any Doubt or Question after this, Whether Christ be yours, or you be his: Consent is essential to Marriage; there can be no Spiritual Marriage to Christ, but by consent of the Will. Knowledge is essential to Consent; he that doth not think and know, cannot consent. If you be therefore consenting and willing to be Christ's upon his own terms, there remains no Doubt whether Christ be yours after that Consent. *Hos.* 3. 3. *Thou shalt be for me, so also will I be for thee.* Christ is for you if you be for him: And when the great Work of Conversion is expresst in Scripture, you find it expresst under the Act of the Wills Consent, in the 110th *Psalm* 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.* That is, of thy Spiritual Off-spring; and this is brought about by consenting to take Christ upon his own terms. But Beloved, don't mistake your selves, I am not about to shuffle over so great a concernment as this is rashly; I am well aware my own and your Salvation too is carried in the matter I am to discourse, and therefore I resolve, in the Strength of *Jesus Christ*, to be impartially faithful between *God* and *us*, in this great matter. I would not for ten thousand Worlds a word should drop from my Lips, to the ruine of any

any Soul, nor yet to diſturb the Peace of any gracious Soul, and therefore let me explain what I have to ſay clearly. There are three things of abſolute neceſſity for the gaining of a ſolid Scriptural Intereſt in Chriſt, the two firſt I hope will paſs current with moſt of us, yet ſome may ſtumble there.

I. The firſt is this: There muſt of neceſſity be a full and ſerious conviction of Sin and Miſery without Chriſt; there's not a Soul that comes to him without ſuch a conviction: The Spirit, when he cometh, he ſhall convince the World of Sin and of Righteouſneſs, *John* 16. 9. that's the Spirit's firſt Work, and 'tis fundamental to all his After-works: And therefore you ſhall find in all the Converts in Scripture, the Lord has been dealing with their Underſtandings firſt, to convince them of their ſinful and miſerable ſtate by nature. And the Lord Jeſus profeſſedly tells us, *He came not to call the righteous, but ſinners, to repentance.* Convinced Sinners, not thoſe that think they have Righteouſneſs of their own; and that the whole have no need of a Phyſician, but they that are ſick: And it muſt needs be ſo, that Chriſt muſt take his courſe, becauſe his Commiſſion leads to it; *Iſa.* 61. 1, 2. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe he hath ſent me to preach glad tydings to the meek, to bind up the broken in heart, and proclaim liberty to the captives.* Theſe are the perſons upon whom Chriſt is to act the great work of Salvation; they are ſaid to be ſuch as are bound with the ſence of Sin, ſuch as are broken hearted through the ſence of their Sin and Miſery: And when he invites Men and Women to come to him,

see how he doth it, in the 11. *Matth.* 28. *Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest:* These are the persons Christ bestows himself upon. So that there must be such a conviction of Sin and Misery by Nature, as leaves us without Hope, without Christ. I don't speak of the degrees of spiritual Trouble, but I take this to be an unquestionable Truth, that so much Conviction as unbottoms the Soul from Self-righteousness and False hopes, is absolutely necessary; and before this is, there can be no Match between Christ and the Soul. If any man be married to his own Righteousness, Duties, and Performances, that Soul hath nothing to do at all with Christ; nor can that Soul be married to Christ, for 'tis married to the Law, another Husband; as you may see in the Sixth of the *Romans*, the Apostle in that Chapter proves to us, that we can have nothing to do with Christ until we are divorced from our own Self-righteousness. That's the first thing, and this, I hope, the Lord hath wrought upon many that are here before him: The Spirit of Illumination hath been upon us, shewing us what miserable Wretches we were, and struck down the Foundation upon which our Hopes were built before.

II. The second thing that is to pass upon every Soul, in order to his Union with Christ, is a full Conviction of the Answerableness and Fulness that is in Jesus Christ, to all the wants and spiritual necessities of the Soul. This you must see, or you will never consent to take Christ for your Lord: *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under Hea-*

Heaven, whereby we may be saved. Here's your Refuge; Christ, and none but Christ, can answer the Neceſſities of my poor Soul. I am full of Guilt, and there is no Righteouſneſs but in Christ to juſtifie me; I am full of Filth, and there is no Holineſs but in Christ to ſanctifie me. To this Refuge therefore in Christ, God ſhuts up every Soul as to his laſt Hopes: Therefore you find in the 3d of *Gal.* 23. we are ſaid to be *ſhut up unto the Faith*: So that we ſee no other way in the World to eſcape Hell, but at this Door, the Lord Jeſus. This alſo, I truſt, the Lord hath made evident to ſo many Souls of you as are in Christ. You ſee your abſolute need of him, and you ſee in Christ a compleat fulneſs to anſwer all the wants of your Souls; that you are ſhut up to him, and have not the leaſt hopes hanging upon any other Object beſides Christ. Well, that's the ſecond thing.

III. To come to the main, for all theſe are but previous Works, and may ſignifie ſomething or nothing; the third thing that gives an Intereſt in Christ, is a deliberate Conſent to part with all things that hinders the enjoyment of him, and to embrace all things that promote and further the enjoyment of the Lord Jeſus. Such a Conſent as this is, will put your Salvation quite out of doubt, if there be any in the World, in Christ, 'tis the Soul that deliberately conſents. Now therefore to open this, remember,

1. Firſt, That here muſt be a deliberate Conſent; it is not a Work to be done *Hand over Head*, as we ſay, raſhly, and ſo to repent afterwards,

to retreat, and call back our Consent afterwards; when we shall meet with something in Religion that we did not look for, there must be a deliberation of the Will. There be many men that hang between willing and unwilling, they do and they do not consent: In some things they can, and in other things they cannot come up to the terms of the Gospel, when the Mind and Judgment of a poor Christian hangs in a doubtful suspence. I would, and I would not; This I could close with, and That I cannot: Here's the undoing of Men. And this was the case of *Agrippa*, *Almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian.* I could go a great way to be a Christian, but I cannot come off roundly to all the Terms of Jesus Christ: What shall we do in such a case as this is? Thy Soul sees Sin and Misery upon one side, and Salvation in *Christ* upon the other side; willing thou art to suffer a little for him, but there be some things in Religion they cannot come up to. Now if a Man will be a thorough *Christian*, he must deliberate the Terms, and heartily resolve to embrace all the Terms of the Gospel, that are made necessary to his Salvation by *Christ*; it must be a thorough Resolution, expreſt in the 119th Psalm, *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* And this is called, *a counting of the Cost.* Such a *Consent* as this is absolutely necessary; and the want of this is the cause of so many Half-christians, which is called, a *Cake not turn'd*; which doth but make Hypocrites in Religion. That's the first thing in *Consent*, Deliberation in the Judgment, pondering the Terms of *Christ* throughly.

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2. The ſecond thing in this *Conſent* is, that a *Chriſtian* muſt heartily reſolve to let go all thoſe things that hinder the enjoyment of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and bleſſed be he of the Lord, whoſe will is brought to this, that there is nothing ſo dear in the World, but he is reſolved it ſhall go; for I muſt tell you, Brethren, there be ſome things of which *Chriſt* ſaith, *If ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way.* So if you ſeek *Chriſt*, there be ſome things that muſt go, and ſome things that may go. Now, thoſe things that are to be parted with in order to the enjoyment of *Chriſt*, are of two ſorts, firſt, ſome things are abſolutely neceſſary to be caſt off without any more ado; and there are ſome things conditionally neceſſary to be parted with; that is, if God's Glory, Truth, and Honour require our parting with them.

Firſt. To begin with the firſt, there are ſome things abſolutely neceſſary to be renounced without any *Conditions*; there muſt be no Scruple as to theſe things; and they are ſuch as theſe:

(1.) Firſt of all, Sinful Self, and all beloved Luſts of our Hearts and Natures: Theſe muſt be renounced, or we can have nothing to do with *Chriſt*: The profitable and pleaſant Sins, that are as right Hands and right Eyes, you muſt part with them, *Chriſtians*, if you will have *Chriſt*, for *Chriſt* and *Sin* cannot reign together. Pray look into *Rom.* 6. 19, 20, 21. and you ſhall ſee the neceſſity of this; *As you have yielded your members ſervants to uncleanneſs, ſo now yield them up* to God, as Inſtruments of Righteouſneſs, *unto holineſs.* You

see the absolute necessity of giving Sin a discharg from all further Obedience, or else we cannot be the servants of the Lord Jesus. *Christian*, I do not say when thou receivest *Christ*, thou shalt never commit a Sin more; no, no, but that which I mean is this, That thou must from henceforth provide for Sin no more, indulge Sin by the consent of the Will no more; you must not continue the acts of it deliberately; you must hate it every ill way, and the consent of your Wills must be to *Christ*; that's the first thing to be let go, or you cannot have an interest in the Lord Jesus.

(2.) The second thing that is absolutely necessary to be renounced and parted with, in order to an *Interest in Christ*, is all our own Self-righteousness; you must let that go too, else *Christ* and you will never agree: That Idol must down, Self-righteousness must be universally and heartily renounced and abhorred. 'Tis plain from *Phil.* 3. 8,9. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness.* You see Self-righteousness must go to the Dunghil, all our own Duties must be renounced, all natural and acquired gifts must be renounced, never to look at Self in whole or in part, in point of *justification*; if you do, you can have nothing to do with the Righteousness of *Christ*; *Rom.* 10. 3. the *Jews* being ignorant of God's Righteousness, went about to *establish* their own Righteousness. Here you see a perfect opposition between a Man's *establishing*

bliſhing his own Righteouſneſs, and getting an intereſt in Chriſt. Friends, you muſt not think of two Righteouſneſſes, one in Chriſt, and another in your ſelves: *I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even of thine only.* Down with all Self-righteouſneſs, or you can have nothing to do with Chriſt.

(3.) The third thing that is to be let go for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, are all Companions in Sin: How much Delight ſoever you have formerly had in them, you muſt henceforth make them no more your delightful choſen Aſſociates. Here's the parting Point between wicked Men and the Saints of Jeſus Chriſt. I don't ſpeak of Civil Commerce, as Men in the World, there we muſt have to do with wicked Men, but I ſpeak of choſen delightful Companions in Sin, when 'tis an Act of the Will; 1 *Pet.* 4. 3, 4. *Wherein they* wonder *that ye run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot, ſpeaking evil of you.* Ay, here's the breach made, when we come to Chriſt, between us and the wicked World; *Pſal.* 15. 4. ——— and ſo you ſhall find in *Pſal.* 119. 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee.* Beloved, Chriſt requires you to caſt off the delightful company of wicked ones; Chriſtians are a company of themſelves, and none but ſuch ſhould be choſen: *All my delight is in the Saints*, ſaith *David.* Whatever Tyes there be, unleſs it be thoſe of natural and civil Relations, they muſt not tye us to wicked men, but we muſt be the Companions of the Servants of Chriſt, if we will have Chriſt.

Secondly, There are ſome things that may be let go, or may not; that is according as God calls, or calls not for them: If the Glory of God ſhall require

quire it, then we are to part with them; and these are all Earthly Comforts, if so be they come to be inconsistent with the Truths or Glory of *Christ*, rather than deny the Truths of *Christ*; when his Glory or Enjoyment comes in competition, then *Christ* requires us to part with them. Such are our estates, when the Glory of the Lord Jesus shall call us to deny them, as the believing *Hebrews* were. Such are our Liberty, when we cannot keep it without the eclipsing the Honour of the Lord Jesus: Yea, such is also our natural Life, if that be laid in ballance with the Truths of Christ. He would not have his People reckon their Lives dear upon his account; either I must deny the known Truth, or my Liberty, Life, or Estate must go: And now, if any of these come in competition with Christ, they must all go: *Luke* 14. 33. *Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* This includes Estate, Liberty, and Life, Now, here is the stick in the case, How far a poor Soul can come up to *Christ's* Terms, upon this Conditional Necessity. I do not doubt, but there be many Souls in *Christ* that have many Fears about it, what their Heart will do; many shaking Fears what they will do in an hour of Temptation; yet *Christ* hath the consent of their Hearts, that *all shall go*; they will forsake Father, Mother, Wife, Children. "Why, "Lord, saith a poor Christian, if I cannot enjoy "these without the destruction of my poor Soul; "in thy Strength I resolve to follow thee in the "deepest paths of Self-denyal, to the last breath. And without this you cannot be Christ's Disciples.

My

My Friends, the Lord Jesus hath set down the Terms, and he will not come lower, and if you cannot come up to his Terms, Christ and you must part, he will not come down for the sake of any man; therefore consider of those things. Now, he that is contented to part with *all*, rather than part with *Christ*, that *Soul* is for *Christ*, and *Christ* is for that Soul. But there is the last thing, and that is, the embracing of all those things that may help you to enjoy *Christ*: These are deep tryals of the Heart, and therefore it concerns us to make deep searches here. Well then, there be four things that do further a man's Soul in the way to *Christ*, and are you contented, and that deliberately, *Christians*, to embrace them all to help you to *Christ*?

1. *First*, Are you contented to embrace and welcome all the Ordinances of God and Duties of Religion, both publick and private, without exception of one of them? Can you turn your Feet to all his Ordinances? I know some *Christians* have a Zeal for some Duties, and not for others; but publick and private Duties, Heart-duties, and Life-duties, all that have the Stamp of *Christ's Institution* upon them, must be embraced; as in *Psal.* 119. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.* When you dare not neglect a Duty, but bring a serious Heart to every Duty, if you be *Christ's*, you must come under the Law of his House.

2. *Secondly*, Are you contented to embrace all Fatherly Corrections from the hand of God, for the killing of the Remainders of Sin in you? If you

you will be for *Christ*, you must submit to *Christ's* Method: It is in vain to say, If I can travel to Heaven without meeting a Storm in the way, I am willing to go; thou must be contented with all Afflictions, to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Paul* could say, in 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in persecutions, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong.* Ay, that was a high frame; I will not strain up your Experiences to *Paul's*; But, can you consent to endure them? Can you bear a Rod from God when it is to purge your Corruptions? Can you bear a Persecution from God, without starting from your Duty?

3. *Thirdly*, If you will be *Christ's*, you must submit to all those means *Christ* hath appointed, for the mortification of your *Corruptions*, be they never so hard, Rebukes from GOD, Rebukes from Men, by Afflictions, and by the Word, for the mortification of Sin? Can you say, *Christians*, that you are willing to have your *Mistakes* detected by GOD or Men, your *Corruptions* discovered, any thing that helps to the pulling up the Roots of *Corruption*? Surely thus it *must* be, if you will be for *Christ*, all faithful Admonitions, all necessary Afflictions.

4. *Fourthly*, and lastly, If you will be for *Christ*, and be his, you must embrace all pains, watchings, and labourings after Holiness, to the end of your days: Holiness will cost a *Christian* abundance of Labour, but this you must do, or you cannot be *Christians*. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,* per-

perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Here's the Work of a *Christian*, *cleansing Work* and *perfecting Work in the fear of God*, to the end of our Lives. You must take the pains that other *Christians* do if you will have *Christ* for your Portion. Now mark what I say: He that is willing to part with all that hinders the enjoyment of *Christ*, as sinful Self and righteous Self; and he that resolves to embrace all things that may help him forward to the enjoyment of *Christ*, as all the Ordinances of *God*, all Fatherly correction from the hand of *God*, all means of mortification from *GOD* or Men, and all pains for Holiness; he that is contented with these terms is as surely *Christ's* as ever was any Soul. I have not made the terms in one point higher than *Christ* hath made them.

And thus I have shewed you *Christians* what the Terms are, in which you are allowed to enroll your selves in the *Catalogue of Christians*. And, oh that the Lord would set home this one tryal to the satisfaction of our Souls, then we may say, *The Lord is my God*, and *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

FINIS.

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HELPS
FOR
Faith and *Patience*
IN
Times of Affliction.

In Three Parts.

VIZ.

I. *Samson*'s Riddle spiritualiz'd.
II. Orthodox Paradox: Or, The greatest Evil working the greatest Eternal Good.
III. Heaven and Earth epitomiz'd: Or, Invisibilities the greatest Realities.

By *James Durdwood* late Minister in *Dartmouth*.

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LONDON,
Printed by *J. W.* for *Jonathan Robinson*, at the *Golden Lyon* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard, 1693.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE

Religious, and my very dear Kinswoman,

Mrs. *Mary Cholwich*,

Of *Hele* in *Cornwood*, in *Devon*.

AND

To the rest of the Family, related by the Bonds of Grace and Nature; the Author of the ensuing Discourse heartily wisheth encrease of all Grace here, and the fulness of Glory hereafter, through the Merits of our Dear Lord Jesus Christ.

THE many multiplied Favours you have continually shewed to my self and Family, obligeth me to make this acknowledgment thereof, by presenting to you all this little Testimony of my true Love

and real Gratitude, humbly praying for your kind Acceptance and diligent Perusal. Let me mind you, and my self no less, That we are come towards the Evening of our Day: The Contents of this Book, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, may help us in making due preparation for our latter end; in which, I doubt not but you are daily engaged. The Sun of our Life is going down on our outward man: You, my most dear Kinswoman, as well as my self, have been kept several Years upon the Graves mouth, and have been many times brought back from the Pit: Oh that the Sun of

Patience may have their perfect Work: He will have Glory, and we shall be Gainers. It hath pleased our good God to call us off from the enticing, lying, ly-

ing

ing Vanities of this present Evil World, for our advantage, I hope; what have we to do now, but to *give all diligence to make our calling and election sure.* 'Lord, pardon 'former negligence, and help us to get 'on the Wedding-garment of Christ's 'Righteousness and Holiness, that we 'may bid our blessed Bridegroom wel-'come.

To the rest of my Honoured Cousins.

May I obtain the Favour from you to spend a little of your little unexpired time in reading this small *Book*, and pray for a *Blessing* on what you read.

I am sure the Contents do nearly concern you all: You are all travelling to another Country, Eternity is at hand, Death is near, Time is precious, your Souls; the World is vain, the Heart is deceitful: Oh, could I prevail with you to spend some time in close Self-examination, in constant heavenly Meditation, in Watchfulness, in Self-denyal and Mortification, you would much engage me, and advantage your own Souls. I pray the *Blessing of God* may go along

with this poor piece; there are many have better Heads, and better Hearts may do better.

Now, that you all, and your Relations, old and young, may be taken into the *Covenant of Grace*, and may grow up in all things in Christ Jesus; that after our wearisom Pilgrimage in this Wilderness-World, we may at last enter into the Promised Land, and enjoy that everlasting Rest, purchased by the most precious Blood of our dearest Lord, and there live with him for ever, is the earnest Prayer of

Your very affectionate and

much obliged Kinsman,

Aug. 1. 1693.

James Burdwood.

TO THE

Honeſt-hearted Reader.

INſtead of an Epiſtle (which for want both of outward and inward ſtrength, having been tryed with about Eight or Nine Years Sickneſs, and moſt part of the time confined to my Chamber and Bed, I cannot perform) I ſhall only preſent you with the ſeveral Points of Doctrine handled in the enſuing Treatiſe, having ſome time ſince caſt one Mite into the Church's Treaſury, viz. *my* Hearts Eaſe, *do now adventure to caſt in this other, though very unworthy to be laid up among ſo many choice Pearls: But I remember,* who will not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things. *Had I not been unfaithful in the improvement of the Talents my Great Maſter had entruſted me with, I might have had more. I humbly beg the fervent Prayers of ſuch Readers as truly love the Salvation of Souls, to pray the Lord to pardon all my ſlothfulneſs and negligence in the Work of the Lord, through the moſt precious Blood of the*

moſt

most precious Lord Jesus Christ, without which I perish; and which is all I beg of them for my self.

Now, having been a long time disabled to say or do any thing for the edification of others, and not likely to be of any use any more in this World, I was willing, while I could hold my Pen, and in any measure compose my Mind, much broken by Affliction, to emit this into the World, with my poor, yet earnest Prayers, That the Blessing of the Lord will go with it; as also, to testifie my Gratitude to Him who hath wonderfully delivered me from so many Deaths, and yet doth deliver, and graciously supports me under so many multiplied Afflictions; for which I hope, through God's great Mercy, and Christ's precious Merits, I shall have cause to bless God to all Eternity.

Readers, pray for a Blessing on what you read, and for

Your affectionate Friend and Servant

in any thing for your Souls good,

whilst I am

From my Sick Chamber, *Aug.* 1st. 1693.

J. B.

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Doctrine 2. That the light and short Afflictions of the People of God here in this World, are singularly useful, to work them for, and to work for them a *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

PART

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Doct. 6. That the due minding of, and meditating upon unseen eternal things, will much help to support the People of *God* under all their Sufferings in this World.

Gentle Readers, If you meet with some literal Mistakes, or Mispointings, I pray excuse the Author, being so far from the Press, and not in capacity exactly to review the Copy; but in the exercise of your Charity towards him, and by your Prayers on what you read, you may, by God's Blessing, find Benefit; which is the earnest desire of *Your Servant*, J. B.

THE

Publisher to the Reader.

THE Pious Author sent this Treatise to the Press some time since; but before it was finished, it pleased God to take him out of a state of great Tryals and Afflictions, into a state of Glory and Happiness; so that his Friends may entertain this as a Funeral Sermon, *prepared by his own hand; in the serious reading of which, they will find that he experimentally felt, and truly practis'd the substance of this Book,* viz.

1. *That he found a great deal of Comfort in sanctified Afflictions; and that as his outward man decayed, so his inward man was* renewed day by day.

2. *That the light and short Afflictions of this Life did work for him* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.

3. *That because all visible things are temporal, and of no long continuance,*

there-

therefore his Heart was not engaged in them; nor was he too much concerned for them, or about them.

4. *That having a right and true judgment of Earthly things, he was thereby much supported under all his sore Afflictions.*

5. *That he did most seriously mind, and his Heart was most diligently fixed on unseen and eternal things; and that,*

6. *The due minding of, and meditations upon* unseen *and* eternal things *did much support his Soul in all his Sufferings in this World, and made him long for the full fruition of that God, who is now his Portion for ever.*

I pray God succeed this Treatise, and sanctifie the loss of such excellent and holy men to us all, particularly to the Town of Dartmouth, *which in less than Three years time, hath been deprived of Three Great Lights,* viz. *Mr.* Flavel, *Mr.* Burdwood, *and Mr.* Chapman.

FOOD

FOOD
FOR
Faith and *Patience*:
OR,
SAMPSON's Riddle
Spiritualiz'd.

PART I.

2 Cor. iv. 16.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward Man perish, yet our inner Man is renewed day by day.

IN these words we have a Divine Cordial to prevent the fainting of God's People, under the troubles of this Life; commended to us, from the experience of the Apostles and Primitive Christians. For although the words may

have a reference to what goeth before, unto some other grounds and means of comfort and support which they had (as I have largely discoursed of elsewhere) besides this; yet this was one ground of their comfort and support, that they gained by their losses; Their Souls prospered, while their Bodies wasted; what they lost in the outward Man, they gained in the inward Man, and for this cause they fainted not: and wherever this is found by experience, it will be a ground of support and comfort. Now that this truth of God (so proper and pertinent to my present Condition, which is a perishing of my outward Man) may be a means to support and uphold me, to the praise of my God: I have pitcht my thoughts upon it, and humbly begging the gracious assistance of his Holy Spirit, that I may rightly understand the mind of God in it, and rightly apply it to my own Soul, and may find and feel the power of it, and by Faith suck out the sweetness of it, to my support and consolation: now seeing those evil days are come upon me, wherein I may truly say, I have no Pleasure in them; praying also, that these my Meditations on this Text may be useful to them into whose hands they may fall.

The Doctrinal Conclusion I observe From the Words is,

That it is the Comfort and the Character of truly gracious Persons, that as their outward Man doth decay, decline and perish; so their inward Man doth revive, increase, and is renewed.

Four Things are to be explicated, which will fully open the Text, and demonstrate the Proposition.

1. That in Man there are two Parts, an outward and an inward Man; and what these are.

2. That

2. That the outward Man is subject to declining, decaying and perishing; it cannot be avoided nor prevented, but it must be so: and that the inward Man is capable of increasing, growing, and renewing.

3. That the decaying, decreasing and perishing of the outward Man, in gracious Persons, through the great Goodness and Grace of God, tendeth unto the increasing and renewing of the inward Man; and what influence the one hath upon the other to effect the same.

4. That this is the Comfort and the Character of truly gracious Souls.

First, that there is an outward Man is obvious to sense: That we have Bodies of flesh and blood and bone is evident enough: This is the Shell, the Carcase, the Bark of the Man, as I may say; but there is an inner Man also, which every body doth not believe; for too many live and walk in so much care and fear, with so much sollicitousness about the outward Man, the Body, and the provisions and accommodations of it, that the inner man is totally neglected; whose whole care is for the Body, as if they had no Souls at all to mind or care for: And oh! that God would pardon and purge this guilt from my Soul through Christ's blood; but we must know there is an inner Man also, *Rom.* 7. 22. *Ephes.* 3. 16. And the Scripture speaks of Wisdom in the inner parts, *Job* 38. 36. And of truth in the inward parts, *Psal.* 51. 6. and God promiseth to write his Law in the inner parts, *Jer.* 31. 32. This inner Man, is the Man of the Man, the Kernel, the Jewel, the Treasure. But more particularly,

By the *outward Man*, I understand the Body, and all the concernments and accommodation of it, all that tends to the preservation

veniences of it: Animal-life, Livelyhood, Bodily-Endowments and Comforts; Health, Strength, Beauty, Eaſe, Liberty, Friends, Relations, Eſtate, and whatſoever tends to the outward Welfare of the Body; Food, Phyſick, Recreation, Reſt, &c.

By *the inner Man*, I underſtand the Soul and all its faculties, the Spiritual, inviſible part of Man, and all the concernments and accommodations of it; and all that conduceth to the Life and Livelyhood of the Soul; to the Preſervation, Health, Strength, Safety, Liberty and Advantage of it; all its Graces and Comforts; all that belongs to the *inner Man*, to its Being, and well-being.

As for the Qualities of both, they are theſe.

1. As for the Body, ſimply and ſingly conſidered for the fleſh and blood, the Scripture gives us many Epithetes of it: as, *Houſes of Clay, Earthly Tabernacles, Duſt and Aſhes, earthen veſſels*, &c. And theſe Bodies are.

1. *Vile bodies. Phil.* 3. 21. becauſe made of vile and baſe materials; ſubject to vile diſeaſes; to vile abuſes; to vile abominations; and to a vile diſſolution at laſt; ſowen indiſhonour, ſhall end in Corruption; great hinderances to the Soul many waies.

2. The *outward Man* is the mortal Man, that of Neceſſity muſt dye and return to duſt, from whence it came; this cannot poſſibly live alway: There is an irreverſible Sentence of Death paſt upon it. *Hebr.* 9. 27. and for theſe reaſons, the Body is the worſt part of Man; the worſt by far; and ſhould be leaſt eſteemed: and ſuch as is the Body, even ſuch are all bodily Comforts and Accommodations; Health, Strength, Beauty, Liberty, Friends, Honours, Eſtate, &c. all mortal, mutable, decaying, fading, dying things: daily experience confirmeth this: I need ſay no more.

2. But

2. But for the *inner Man*, the Soul, that is 1. Precious; ſo precious, that it is more worth than all the World. *Matth.* 16. 26. *Pſal.* 49. 8. having the bleſſed Image of the glorious God ſtamped on it at firſt; being capable of knowing and injoying the true and living God; and when ſin had ſpoil'd and captivated it, it could not be redeemed, but by the precious Blood of the Son of God. So are all the Concernments of the Soul precious alſo. 2. It is immortal alſo; it never dies, it lives for ever: None can, nothing can kill the Soul; that is, cauſe it not to be: and for theſe reaſons, it is the nobleſt, chiefeſt and beſt part of Man; and hence alſo the Concernments of the Soul are more excellent, more noble and precious than thoſe of the *outward Man*; the Graces and Comforts, the Strength and Beauty of the Soul; the Priviledges, and Peace, and Wellfare of the Soul are more excellent and precious, as will more appear in the next particular.

2. The ſecond thing to be conſidered is, That the *outward Man* is ſubject to decline and periſh. The Body it ſelf; all its Beauty, Strength, Health, &c. is ſubject to decay. The Bodies, even of the beſt Saints, that ſhall one day be made like unto Chriſt's glorious Body, are ſubject to vile Infirmities and Diſeaſes.

What is become of *Sampſon*'s Strength, and *Saul*'s Beauty? *Job* and *David* will tell us of their decays in all theſe; their Friends, Eſtates, Relations; their Health, and all their outward Comforts failed them; and how can we poſſibly hope, that we ſhall keep them? All outward things are dying Vanities; we are all of us travelling to the Land of forgetfulneſs. They that live longeſt, go the far-

theſt way about; and they that dye ſooneſt, go the ſhorteſt way home. Our greateſt Care ſhould be, to be ſure, that we are in the right way to Eternal Life.

But now, the *inner Man* is capable of growing, increaſing and renewing; *our inner Man is renewed day by day*, ſaith the Text: Grace and Peace, Spiritual Life, inward Strength and Comfort, are capable of increaſing. For

1. This God commandeth; That Chriſtians ſhould grow and increaſe, 2. *Pet.* 1. 5. and 3. 18. and that they ſhould abound and go forward, and be ſtrengthned.

2. This is God's Promiſe to his People; that they ſhall grow and flouriſh, *Pſal.* 92. 14. *Iſai.* 14. 40. 29, 30, 31. They that wait on the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength.

3. This is the Character of a gracious Soul: *Prov.* 4. 18. and 24. 5. *Coll.* 1. 10. and 2. 19. *Eph.* 4. 16. And this the Apoſtle prays for; 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 12. and 4. 16. 3 Epiſt. *John* 2. This the Soul is capable of; being deformed by ſin, and God's Image defaced on it, it is capable of being renewed, and of having God's bleſſed Image repaired on it; which is begun in Regeneration, and is ſtill carried on, and promoted by God's Ordinances and his Providences, his Spirit working in them, and with them upon his People; All afflictions being intended for, and ſanctified unto this end; to make Souls more and more like unto Jeſus Chriſt. Thoſe weaknings and periſhings of the *outward Man*, being, by the love and wiſdome of God, deſigned to ſtrengthen, repair, and better the *inner Man*; that the Soul may be made, and muſt be made more holy, more humble, more heavenly, more like God: it muſt grow

up

up in all things like unto Christ; *Ephes.* 4. 12,13. The Soul, the *inner Man*, may, and must get more strength against Corruption and Temptation; it must get more Victory over the World, and over it self; it must grow in self-denyal, in faith, in patience, in hope, in Communion with God; it must increase in knowledge and experience; it must get nearer God; and more weaned from the World, and better prepared to put off this earthly Tabernacle of the Body: Wherefore is the Christian train'd up in Christ's Schools, his School of Ordinances, and of Providences; but that the Soul, the *inner Man*, may be made better? That Grace may grow; for it is the Growth of Grace, that evidenceth the Truth of it. And why doth our heavenly Father chastise us in our outward Comforts, but to better us in our *inward Man*.

But, before I proceed, let me pause a little, and commune with my own heart: O my Soul! Thou hast been under the blastings and witherings of thy *outward Man*; these many years thou hast been in the School of Correction: Thy God hath made many breaches upon thy earthly Comforts; stript thee of thy dearest Relations, of thy Liberty, of thy Estate, of opportunities of serving thy God in thy place; deprived thee of thy Health and Strength, &c. yet hath he dealt with thee, infinitely better than thy Sins have deserved. It is his mercy thou art not consumed; not in Hell, not in thy Grave: but O my Soul! what art thou the better for all those stroaks upon thy *outward Man?* What hast thou gained by all thy losses? It is true, Afflictions are dry Rods, and my heart, a dead heart; there can be no blossoms, nor fruit, without God's Blessing, and the Word and Spirit's working in and by Affliction: but what blessing

upon all thy troubles canst thou discern? What good to the *inner Man* have these afflictions done thee? Art thou more sensible of the evil of Sin? more weary of it, and more grieved with it? Is thy Heart more tender, thy Spirit more humble, thy will more subdued to Gods will? Art thou more Crucified to the Creature; thy inordinate Affections mortified; thy unruly Passions subdued? Art thou more meek and patient? Are thy Affections raised, and more inlarged after God, and Christ, and Heaven? Is Jesus Christ more precious to thee? And dost thou pant and thirst more after the manifestations of his Love to thy Soul? Art thou more watchful over thy thoughts, words and actions? More careful to please God, more fearful to displease him? More tender of his Honour? More sensible of the Afflictions of *Joseph*? More diligent in holy Duties? More frequent in Self examination, in heavenly Meditation, in heavenly discourse? Art thou, O my Soul, ashamed of, and grieved for thy former Miscarriages, thy mis-spending time, Breath, Liberty, Strength? *&c.* More diligent in preparing for thy Dissolution; and more contented with thy present Condition? Dost thou endeavour now to go to the Fountain for all Supplies? And dost thou labour with all thy might, in the strength of God, to make up all thy losses and breaches in God, and in his Covenant through Christ? Dost thou prize the promises, and laboureſt to live upon them by Faith? Is God and Christ more in thy thoughts and affections than heretofore? And dost thou labour to get out the blessing of thy Afflictions, and art most earnest with God for the blessing? Dost thou labour to cast all thy care upon God, and to trust him with all? If any of these things appears, let God have all the Glory; and blessed

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be God for any weak desires after these sweet Fruits. Deny not what God hath done for thee; but be ashamed and grieved, that thou art no better: Cry to God mightily, wrestle with him for his blessing upon thy afflictions.

3. The third Particular is, That the Decaying and Perishing of the *outward Man* to God's people, tends to the strengthning, the prospering and renewing of the *inner Man*. The Adversity of the Body proves the Prosperity of the Soul, to all gracious Persons, and to them only. The Soul and Body of a Saint, is like the House of *David* and *Saul*; as the one grows weaker and weaker, the other grows stronger and stronger; and where it is so, there is good ground of Comfort under all outward troubles; and where it is not so, there is little ground of Comfort for the present: although, there may be a growing in the Soul, when it is not discerned; as there is of the Babe in the Womb, and of the Corn in the Earth, under the Clods; both grow, even when they are not discerned; but in due time will appear. But more of this afterward.

Quest. But how comes this to pass? What Efficacy and Influence have the perishings of the *outward Man*, to help forward the increasings of the *inward Man*? How the Sicknesses, Pains, Troubles, Losses, Crosses upon the *outward Man*, should greatly contribute to the Strengthning and Renewing of the *inward Man*, is the Question; which great Truth resolved, clearly apprehended, firmly believed and experienced, will tend very much to a poor Christians Consolation.

Anſ. 1. By the Decays and Witherings of the *outward Man*, thoſe Hinderances are removed, which did very much obſtruct the Growth, Strength and Comfort of the *inward Man*. When *David's outward Man* flouriſhed; When he had his Honour, Health, Eaſe, Liberty, and the confluence of earthly Comforts about him; he was weak in his Soul; that lay languiſhing in ſinful Security; he was ſo weak in his Soul, that he could not reſiſt the leaſt Temptation; but was ſhamefully conquered by the glance of his Eye. Ordinarily, our Souls are in the worſt caſe, when our Bodies are in the beſt caſe: It is pitty (we ſay) that fair weather ſhould do hurt: yet ſo it is. The welfare of the *outward Man*, tends to the ill-fare of the *inward Man*, without a more than ordinary meaſure of Grace.

For *firſt*, Ordinarily, the Proſperity of the *outward Man* interpoſeth betwixt God and the Soul; and keeps God at a diſtance from the Soul; and the Soul at a diſtance from God: Jeſus Chriſt loves not to lye in their arms, who embrace other Lovers. God will be uppermoſt, or not at all; neareſt the heart, or not at all there. He deſerves Beſt, and will have the Beſt, or will accept of nothing.

While the *outward Man* is fixt on the Creature, the *inner* is not far off from it; and then it is ſo far divided from God. 2 *Cor.* 5. 6. While the Soul is at home in the Body, it is abſent from the Lord; and the reaſon is, Becauſe of that power the Body hath upon the Soul, to draw it down to it ſelf, and even ſink it into it ſelf; and to participate with it. It is hard for a poor Bird to flye up, that hath weights tyed to his feet; and harder for a poor Soul to Mount up, or indeed to move with any ſpeed heaven-ward, that hath ſuch a weight of Clay hanging on it. And this made godly *Agur* afraid of fulneſs. *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. Uſually,

Usually, Prosperity begets Pride; and Pride sets us at a distance from God; God resisteth the proud: he sees the proud afar off. Christians are never so far from God, as when they are nearest to their outward Comforts and Enjoyments. God is then but in few of their thoughts: Now it is the Presence or Absence of God, that makes Summer and Winter in the Soul; as it is the presence and absence of the Sun that makes Summer and Winter on the Earth. Now, if Prosperity does withdraw our hearts from God, (as too often it doth) it causeth God to withdraw from us, (though we may not find him wanting, while earthly Comforts continue with us) it must needs do us a great deal of hurt; for if God withdraw or withhold the influences of his Grace from us, our Souls must needs be in a sickly and languishing condition! How weak and feeble must we be, when God doth not continue his Grace to us? Prosperity lies betwixt God and our Souls; which we all know by woful Experience: and our God, our gracious Father knows it, and therefore, in tender love to our Souls, many times breaks our outward Prosperity, that our Souls may not be drown'd in it, and perish by it.

2. *Secondly*, The welfare of the *outward Man* hinders the *inner Man* from that serious, diligent, hearty intent, and Spiritual Service, that it should perform to God: in which the Soul might have had many sweet meetings with God, and many Communications of Love and Grace from him; which, through the defects of his duties, are suspended from him. *Isai.* 64. 5. and this must needs tend to the weakning of the Soul. What Strength, Life, Comfort, have God's People found in holy Duties? How have their Souls been refresht, their

Hearts

Hearts raised, and quickned, and enlarged after God many times? but then they have been serious, earnest, fervent in Spirit in these Duties. Now in Prosperity, what careless, heartless service do we perform? How soon weary? secretly glad when the work is over? How ready upon the least occasion to neglect a Duty, or an Ordinance? Not so fearful to dispense with some Service that God calls for; nor so fearful to draw nigh a Temptation. O, how cold, dead, and heartless are we in Duty? All this is too true, O my Soul, see it, lament and bewail; and bless the Lord for time to do it, and bless him more for an heart to do it.

What bad service did *Manasses* do to God? Or, rather what great service did he do the Devil, when he was in his prosperity? never minding his God, or his Soul, till his outward man perished.

3ly, It hinders communion with God, which is the very life of gracious Souls, their Heaven upon Earth: Communion with God in holy Ordinances, and holy Duties: as Prayer, Praises, Meditation, *&c.* is that which fattens and prospereth the Souls of God's people; but outward prosperity hinders communion with God in these; for then, even while outward comforts are present, God, and his company, and presence, are not so much found wanting, nor so much valued, desired, and panted after, as in a barren Wilderness, where no waters of worldly comforts are, *Psalm* 63. 1, 2, 3. *Psalm* 42. 1, 2, 3. When *David* was in great straits, stript of his earthly Comforts, bedewed all with Tears; then his Soul panted after God: when he was in the Valley of *Baca*, then he looks unto the Mountains of Myrrh, the Garden of Spices, *Psalm* 84. 1, 2, 3, 4. Is it not so

so with God's People? when their Liberty, Friends, Health, Estate, &c. are gone; then God is sought for, and communion with him, earnestly longed and thirsted for, more than ever; and then usually most enjoyed.

By Acts of Communion with God, Souls converse, commerce, and trade with God, trade in Heaven, and that turns greatly to their advantage: We can never take a Voyage to Heaven by Prayer or Meditation, but it will turn to account first or last; some gain to our Souls will accrue by every act of communion: We cannot touch Christ by our Faith or Love, but some Vertue will flow from him to our Souls, *Psalm* 145. 18. *God will fulfil the desires of them that fear him: He will satisfie the hungry with good things. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.* Every groan of a gracious Soul after Grace, every pant and breathing after God in truth, is observed and recorded in Heaven, Mal. 3. 16. *A book of remembrance for them that thought upon his Name.* O, the transcendent goodness of our most gracious God, to take notice of such poor things! *He will not despise the day of small things*: and what an encouragement is this to us, to spend our most serious thoughts on God: But Prosperity in the World, doth stop and interrupt the Soul's converse and trade with God; by estranging the heart from God and heavenly things, and so it becomes very prejudicial to the prosperity of the inward man. It is very hard for a man to have much of the World in his hands, and much of Heaven in his heart also: to have much converse with, and much enjoyment of Creature-comforts, and to have his Conversation in Heaven too. And when do our Souls thrive and flourish best, but when we

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are trading above, conversing with God?

Now these great Mischiefs, I have named, to the *inner man*, are promoted by the prosperity of the *outward man*; thus:

1. By making us forgetful of those things that we should necessarily remember, in order to the good of our Souls: Prosperity spoils the Memory exceedingly, as to heavenly and spiritual things; and that in these particulars.

Prosperity breeds, 1. Forgetfulness of God, the chief good; and surely that Soul can never thrive that forgets God, who is the Fountain of all its Life, Grace, and Comfort. The remembrance of *God* brought sweetness and satisfaction to *David*'s Soul, *Psalm* 63. 5,6. but Prosperity makes us forgetful of *God*, *Deut.* 6. 11, 12. and *Deut.* 8. 14, 19, 20. Yea, fulness of outward things makes men to deny *God*; of which good *Agur* was afraid, *Proverb.* 30. 9.

2. Forgetful of their best part, their Souls; the Soul is then mostly forgotten, when the Body is mostly minded.

3. Forgetful of their Duties to *God* and *Man*; so it was with *Pharoah*'s Butler.

4. Of the Affliction of *Joseph*, *Amos* 6. 6. When we our selves are at liberty, how apt are we to forget them that are in Bonds.

5. Of Sin; that usually is most remembred in time of Affliction, as in *Joseph*'s Brethren.

6. Of *God*'s *Word*, that is too much forgotten in Prosperity; the Precepts of *God* not obeyed, nor the Promises so relished and believed, nor Threatnings feared.

7. Prosperity makes us forgetful of Death, Judgment, the World to come, Eternity: The Evil Day is put far off.

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All these Seven Things should be always remembred by us, and have our frequent Thoughts and Meditations; for the remembrance of them is very advantageous to the welfare of the *inner man*, and will tend to the good of our Souls; but the flourishing of the *outward man* breeds too much forgetfulness of all these things; and the forgetfulness of these things, drives us from *God*, and *God* from us, keeps us at a distance from him, casts him out of our Minds and Thoughts, makes us unserviceable to him, and hinders our communion with him.

2ly. The flourishing of the *outward man* begets Pride, Wantonness, Security, Envy, Ambition, Contention, negligence in *God's* Service, contempt of others, and many hurtful Lusts, *Deut.* 32. 15. Experience proves this.

3ly. It consumes precious Time and Strength, wastes the Spirits, Thoughts, and Affections, being placed on earthly things, which should all be spent on *God* principally, and but so much on other things, as may fit us for his Service, and in subordination to him: But while men are contriving how to get, how to manage, how to spend, &c. This fills up their Time, Hearts, Thoughts, Minds, Spirits and all; so that there is no place nor room left for *God*, or the concerns of their Souls: Therefore the *wise God* in great Love and Mercy to the Souls of his People, breaks their *outward Prosperity*, which otherwise would ruine their Souls, removing those things that hinder the welfare of the Soul; for when outward Prosperity is gone, then the Soul flies to *God*, it draws nigh to *God*. Prosperity kept it at a distance before; it forgot *God* before, now it remembers him, seeks *God* early, serves him diligently: Now

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it seeks communion with *God*, pants after his Favour, and the sense of his Love: Now the Soul is awakened and enlightned, and now it remembers *God*, and it self, and *Sion*, and its former miscarriages; it now minds Death and Eternity more seriously than ever, and is more diligent in preparation for them; and now the Soul that lay languishing and pining before, while the *outward man* flourished, begins to be in a thriving way; for these things promote the welfare of the Soul. And this is the first way, how the perishings of the *outward man* help towards the renewing and strengthning of the *inner*.

Secondly, The Adversity of the *outward man* promotes the Prosperity of the *inner*; by being a means of bringing in Light and Conviction into the Soul: Prosperity shuts Men's Eyes, and deafens their Ears; but *vexatio dat visum*, Affliction opens Men's Eyes, so that they see what they did not before; and they see things otherwise than before: dark Dispensations bring Light with them. Afflictions put *God's* People upon the search, *Lamen.* 3. 40. Then they retire and look within themselves; then they find out the filthiness, vanity, frowardness, pride, earthliness of their own hearts, more than ever they saw before; then they find and feel their Spiritual Wants, Diseases, Dangers, the treachery, falseness, deceitfulness of their own Hearts; their often grieving, quenching, resisting of *God's Spirit* in time of *Prosperity*; their inordinate Self-love, Flesh-pleasing, and Gratifyings: then they see their former spiritual sloth and negligence, their backwardness to, and weariness in *God's Service*; their formality, deadness, customariness in holy Duties; their impatience of reproof, their hastiness of Spirit, their

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want of tenderness towards, and of sympathy with those that were afflicted; not weeping with those that wept; their censuring and judging others; their want of Charity: then they see how badly they improved their healthful and youthful time; their Talents, and their Enjoyments, with many other Evils are discovered.

As also in times of *Affliction*, there is a discovery of the vanity and emptiness of the Creature: when all Comforts of Life fail; as Health, Wealth, Friends, Liberty, Estate, *&c.* then the Soul is convinced of the vanity and uncertainty of all these: The Rod discovers both Heart and Life, and what the Creature is; And also, then the Souls of *God's People* come to see the surpassing Excellency of *God* and *Christ*, and of the *Promises*, and of the great Importance of the things of the World to come; O, now the Soul can prize an Interest in *God*, and in his *Christ* and his *Covenant*, and is hereupon stirred up to mind *God* more, and Heaven more; and to bestir it self in the use of all Means, and to get Assurance of an Interest in *God*. Now all this tends very much to the Welfare of the *inner man*; and if we well and wisely consider this Benefit which our merciful Father grants us, by blasting and withering our *outward Comforts*; thus to enlighten and convince us of all those things, we shall have cause to Adore and Admire his Goodness towards us, in taking such a course with us, and to cry out with *Job* 7. 17, 18. *What is man that thou shouldest magnifie him? and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Adversity of the *outward man* promotes the Prosperity of the *inner man*, by taking away the *Idols of the Soul*, which divided the Soul from *God*: The best of us are apt to make *Idols* of every Creature-enjoyment, very apt to let out our Hearts in inordinate Affection to Husbands, Wives, Children, &c. and suffer them to have more of our Hearts, Loves, and Delights, than *God* and *Christ*, and *Heaven*; over-prizing and over-loving them, taking too much content in them, and expecting too much from them; and so make *Idols* of them; and then *God* withdraws his gracious Influences from us, those quickning, strengthning, and comfortable Influences of his Spirit from us, and hides his face; and then our poor Souls languish, and we grow weak and feeble; so it was with *David*, *Psalm* 30. 6, 7. but this withdrawing of *God* from us, we do not many times perceive and feel, while our earthly Comforts continue with us; though our Graces be weak, Faith and Love weak, our Passions and Corruptions strong, and are too often too hard for us, and we are carried captive by them; and although we decay in spiritual strength, and grow dead in holy Duties, careless and watchless in our Conversations, and want that vigour, spirit, and life, which sometime we had, which are the effects of the absence of *God's* Spirit; that we grow cold in our Affections to heavenly things: I say, these sad effects of *God's* withdrawment from us, are not perceived and felt by us, so long as our bodily Comforts continue with us; but then it pleaseth our gracious *God* to send some awakening Providences upon us, he sends Adversity, and removes these our *Idols*; and then through *God's* assisting Grace we come to see our sin, and the fruits of it; then

then we see our folly, in letting out of our Hearts upon the vain Creature, and that then *God* did withdraw, and that our Souls did wither and languish; upon which, by the special Grace of *God*, we lament our folly, beg forgiveness through the blood of Christ; and the Lord, being gracious and merciful, returns to the Soul again; and then the Soul begins to recover it self, and to grow better.

Fourthly, Adversity is a means of bringing afresh to our Remembrance those particular special Sins which in Prosperity were forgot; and which, while they lye on us without Repentance, they waste and weaken, hurt and corrupt our Souls. *Adversity* (as was said before) puts *God's* People upon the search of their Hearts and Lives: now they say unto themselves, what have we done? now their Spirits do, or should make diligent search; now they do, or should commune with their own Hearts, and examine their ways, and seek for the plague of their Hearts; their *Dalilah's*, their *Jonah's*, their darling, their beloved Sins, which they did not, or would not see in their Prosperity, nor were willing to be reproved for, but did over-look them, or forgot them, or look'd on them as little ones, and common Infirmities, humane Frailties; and could study shifts to cover and excuse them: Such as Pride and Passion, inordinate Affection, Unthankfulness, Hypocrisie, Covetousness, Selfishness, vain Thoughts, idle Words, Omissions, Unfaithfulness, breaking Vows and Promises; Earthly mindedness, Security, hardness of Heart, unprofitableness under the means of Grace, and many other Heart-evils that scarce appear

appear in time of *Prosperity*; that in time of trou-
ble upon a through search we may find out; a
our Unbelief, want of love to *God* and *Christ*
want of love to *God's Word*, insensibleness of Sin
and want of hatred to it; want of fervent Charity
to others; with many others: which upon a con
sciencious search, and by the help of *God's Spirit*
we shall find out in our selves, which lay hid i
us, corroding and putrifying our poor Souls
which were never so heartily confess'd and la
mented as they should. But when the *Spirit* an
the *Word* comes with Affliction, there is a disco
very made of those lurking Lusts, the filthy co
ners of our false Hearts opened; and every gra
cious Soul is willing to be convinced of every sin
and begs *God* heartily to search him, and to ri
him up, and to shew him all the Evils of his Hea
and Life, with all their aggravating Circumsta
ces, being committed against much Love an
Light, against Conscience, Conviction, Resolu
tion; after many Confessions of them before th
Lord; and many times those Sins are brought t
remembrance, which were quite forgotten; a
sins of Youth, fleshly Lusts, excess in Meat, Drink
Apparel; Disobedience to Parents, mispendin
Time, foolish jesting, rash Anger, sinful Silence
Cowardize in *God's* Cause, neglect of Reprov
neglect of relational Duties; Sabbath-sins, wit
multitudes of others, which will appear upon
diligent search; many omissions of Spiritual Du
ties; as Heavenly Meditations, Self-examinatio
self-denial, Warchfulness; all which the gracio
Soul being convinced of, repents of, mourns fo
before the Lord; and by Faith in the blood
Jesus, obtains Pardon of them, and by the Spir
of Jesus obtains power against them; and so th

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soul being pardoned and healed, recovers, and is renewed day by day; whereas before it lay pining and languishing: this blessed fruit is produced by the blessing of our most gracious *God*, upon the perishings and wastings of our *outward man*.

Fifthly, By disingaging and weaning the Hearts of *God's* People from all the things of this World, mortifying and crucifying their Affections to things below; drawing off the Heart from Creature-comforts, weaning the Soul from those dry breasts. In *Prosperity*, the best of us think little on Mortification, and on crucifying the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts of it; although the very Life and power of true Christianity lies in these; as *Rom.* 8. 13. *Galat.* 5. 24. but then we are for pleasing and gratifying the flesh. Oh, how tender are we of our flesh, and how loth to be cross'd? how deeply are our Affections engaged to the Vanities of the World? how do our Hearts cleave and cling to the Creature, even as our Skin to our Body? how seldom do we think seriously of parting with our Relations, our Health, &c. or of putting off our earthly Tabernacles, and of our lying down our Heads in the dark Grave? How are we afraid of Dangers to our *outward man*, and troubled at evil tydings? how thoughtfully careful to preserve our Creature-comforts with us, not taking so much care to enjoy, *God* in them, and to enjoy them for *God*, as to enjoy them our selves, and for our selves? How near do they lie to our Hearts? Now our loving Father seeing all this, he takes it very ill at our hands, that the Creature should be so near and dear to us, and have so much room in our Hearts; and therefore in love to our Souls, blasts and

wastes

wastes these our Comforts, to draw off our Hearts from them, that we may not set our Affections upon them.

Sixthly, The perishing of the *outward man* furthers the flourishings of the *inward man*, not only by bringing our Sins to our remembrance, (as was shewed but now) but also as being a means of *God's* appointment and blessing, both to purge away Sin past, and to prevent Sin for the future: as *Isa.* 27. 9. the Lord speaking of Afflictions there, upon the Church, saith, *By this therefore shall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged*; and this is all the fruit, to take away his Sin. O blessed design of our good and gracious *God*: O blessed fruit. So *Job* 33. 17, 18. To withdraw man from his purpose, and to hide Pride from Man. Are not many of *God's* People sensible of this? how that by their Afflictions they have been kept from many Sins that without their Afflictions, they had been liable to have fallen into and committed? Surely they will acknowledge it, and give *God* thanks.

Sin is the Sickness and plague of the Soul, which corrupts the Spirit, wounds the Conscience, weakneth Grace: now in time of *Prosperity*, when there is no Plague nor Sickness in Town or Country, but all things belonging to the *outward man* flourish, even then, is the very Air most spiritually infectious, and most places then, and most peoples breath then most infectious; then the contagion of Sin spreads most: let a man then go into what place he will, into what Company almost he will, his Soul is in danger of Infection by Sin: what Contentions, Pride, Envy, Censuring, Backbiting, unjust Dealing, and at best, but vain, idle, unprofitable Discourse is to be heard among most?

and

and how little of promoting the power of Godlineſs, or mutual edification: Now, in ſuch a time the poor Soul gets falls and wounds, gets many a diſeaſe and Spiritual diſtemper; which it perceives not: now it gathers much Ruſt, much Droſs; and it may carry the infection of ſin a long time, and is weakned and waſted by it; which, it may be, others ſee by him more than himſelf; his Paſſions and Corruptions get ground upon him, and he pines day by day: he grows more worldly, froward, proud, &c. and yet perceives it not; and thus the *inner Man* is much damnified, by the advantages of the *outward*. All this, the wiſe God ſeeth and obſerveth, and out of his pity and tender compaſſion to the precious Souls of his poor Servants; ſeeing them thus captivated by their Corruptions, and diſeaſed with ſo many ſpiritual Diſtempers, and that they ſtand in great need of Phyſick, leſt they ſhould periſh, thinks fit to break their worldly proſperity, to give them the bitter purge of affliction; to caſt them into the Furnace, that they may be purified and purged, and ſo recovered and ſaved. *Zachar.* 13. 9. Thus *God* ordereth the fire of affliction as a means to cleanſe and purify his people from their filthineſs, and to make them pure and white. *Dan.* 11. 35.

Seventhly, By exerciſing the Graces of *Gods* people, which in time of their proſperity, were as it were laid aſleep, and for want of uſe and exerciſe did decay, and ſcarce appear: for, it is not Grace in the habit, that doth ſo much comfort the Soul, as Grace in exerciſe: now, Adverſity ſerves to draw out Grace into act and exerciſe; as Faith, Repentance, Hope, Patience, and other Graces: now if ever, the Chriſtian labours to put forth his faith

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on *God* in *Christ*; and on the Covenant and Promises: Oh! now, *God* and *Christ*, and the Covenant and the promises signify something indeed to the Soul; to these, the poor Soul now flies, as it was with *Micah*, 7. 7. When all outward Comforts failed, then he acted his Faith, Hope and Patience. I will look unto *God*, I will wait for the *God* of my Salvation, my *God* will hear me. So *Habb.* 3. 17, 18. Then also, *God*'s People renew their Repentance search their Hearts and Ways, and turn to *God*, as *Ephraem*, *Jerem.* 31. 18, 19. And then, they act their Hope upon the promises of future Glory; and then their Patience appears, and stands them in great stead; and their tender-heartedness, their love to *God*, his Word and People; their contempt of the World; yea, every Grace is exercised mostly in time of affliction: and this is the rare and special excellency of true Grace, that it thrives most and prospers best in the worst times for the most part: Grace is strengthned and fatned, when sensible Comforts are withered and starved; and thus the *inner man* is renewed, when the *outward* doth decay and perish.

Eighly, The perishings of the *outward Man* help forward the flourishing of the *inward*, by making room and place, and preparation in the Souls of *God*'s People, for the gracious Communications of Spiritual Mercies to them: as is evident from that Scripture, *Hos.* 2. 6. and 14 compared. These Creature-enjoyments stood in the way before, fill'd up all the room in the Hearts; now these must be removed, to make way for better Mercies; these too-well-beloved guests must be discarded, that the King of Glory may come in. Other lovers had the heart before, these must be divorced, that the

Lord

Lord Jesus may the more fully and sweetly manifest his love to the Souls of his people: See Mr. *Burr.* on the Second of *Hos.* Verse 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. There are many heavy Judgments threathed, the taking away all the Comforts of the *outward Man*: Where, we may note *God*'s absolute Soveraignty over all our enjoyments, and his propriety in them all: So *Ezek.* 16. 18, 21. All we have is the Lord's; and his gracious, sweet and blessed ends and purposes in threatning and executing those terrible things, and that is wonderful; as Verse 14. Therefore, Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the Wilderness, and speak comfortably to her. It was to make way for the communications of glorious Mercies.

The gracious *God* hath gracious Ends, in all his taking Providences towards his poor people; to make the wastings, fadings, totterings, perishings of their *outward Man*, to prove helpful to the increasing, prospering and flourishing of the *inner Man*.

Outward Takings make way for inward Givings: I will take away (saith *God*) all her Lovers, dry up all her Cisterns, that I may open to her the Fountain. I will strip her naked of all her outward Comforts, that I may speak comfortably to her Soul: Now I will allure her; now I have brought her into the Wilderness; now my poor peoples hearts are taken off from the Creature, I will see now to win them to my self. I may now win their love and gain their hearts to me, seeing they are stript of the earthly comforts.

O what support should this be to *God*'s afflicted People, O, that we could believe it and improve it; that *God*'s design in all his takings from us, is but to make way, that he may bestow greater and

better Mercies upon us: This Argument our Lo
uſed to comfort his Diſciples with, *John* 16. 6,
Of all earthly Comforts, the bodily preſence
Chriſt with his Diſciples was the beſt; yet, he t
them, he muſt leave them, and withal aſſures th
for their comfort, that it was for their advanta
and that it was expedient for them that he ſhou
leave them, that the Comforter might come, whi
ſhould abundantly ſupply his abſence; and w
would not come to them, if he did not go away.

This would be enough to quiet and comfort
in all ſinking providences, that theſe takings
intended to make way for the giving of Spiri
Mercies, if our unbelief, diſtruſt, deſponde
and impatience do not hinder.

Oh, could we but drink in this truth, and fir
ly believe it, that *God*'s takings from us, are
order to his givings to us; as *God* took from *Da*
an Infant begot in Adultery, and gave him
Solomon in its room; and that his Caſtings of
down, are in order to his Raiſings of us up;
witherings of our outward intended for the rene
ings of our inner; how patiently and comfortab
ſhould we bear our troubles; yea, and how fe
vently ſhould we pray, that *God* would bring
paſs all thoſe his gracious purpoſes upon o
Souls.

I ſhall conclude this particular by ſetting do
an Inſtance of our times, which I had from a Pe
ſon of Quality and Honeſty; tho' I never uſe
record Reports, but this, upon the credit of t
relator, I ſhall for once, and it is very remar
ble.

There was ſome years ſince, in *London*, a ve
Godly Gentleman and his Wife, who had a ve
fair Eſtate, both of them very zealous profeſſor
Religi

Religion, eminent for Piety and Charity; who had lived together many years, but had never a Child, which they much desired, and often sought the Lord to build their Family for them; and at last, God was pleased to give them a Son, to their great joy; which lived and grew up to be three or four Years Old, exceeding fair and witty, very delightful and pleasant, tractable and teachable; and they having but this one Child, their affections were much set upon him; and likely too much: The Husband and Wife lived exceeding lovingly together, insomuch that many observed their sweet Carriage to each other; he being of a lovely disposition, and every way well bred, and a Man of good Parts, and of an Holy Life; so amiable and tender to his Wife, that her Life was even bound up in his: In the midst and height of this their Prosperity, the Gentleman falls Sick and Dies; which was so heavy a stroak to his poor Wife, that she could not bear up under it: her Spirit sinks, and she refused to be comforted: many Prayers were put up to *God* for her in the publick Congregations; and many pious Ministers and godly Friends visited her, to Comfort her, but to no purpose; for she had no regard to her self, or did care to Eat or Drink, but for meer necessity, but would sit in the Chimney-corner all day, sighing and weeping, and hanging down her head, seldom giving an answer to any body: Upon a certain day, some godly Ministers with Christian Friends by agreement, met at her House to Fast and Pray, and seek *God* for her; and it came to pass, that after they had ended their work, walking up and down where this disconsolate Widow was; her lovely Child playing there in the Room, (of whom she took no notice) had got a Joint-stool; and carrying it up and

down, at last he turns the Stool upside down, and immediately fell or thrust himself into it, no Person present knew how; but the Stool and the Child overturning together, the Childs head being downward, he brake his Neck; they sent presently for Physicians and Chirurgeons, but the Child died presently; and no means would avail at all, to get so much as one breath from him; which was most amazing and astonishing to all the beholders: the Chamber being then full: The poor Mother sate there all this while in her usual posture, but when she saw her Child was really dead, she arose up and before them all, uttered these words, or words to this purpose; most of them are the very words: O! blessed Jesus, will nothing please thee but the heart of thy poor Creature; and the whole heart and the whole love; now take it, Lord; take it, thou hast won it, thou art worthy of it, I give thee my whole heart, Lord, take it, take it, fill it with thy Love, and possess it for ever. And from that very moment, she was filled with joy and comfort, and walked very chearfully and comfortably several Months, even until *God* took her unto himself. Here we see the truth of what I have been treating of; the Lord made the blastings and breakings of her *outward Man* the means of refreshing and comforting her *inner*. I should not have set this down, but that I depend upon the Credit of the Relator. O Lord! how unsearchable are thy Judgments, and thy ways past finding out!

4. The last particular proposed, was that for a Christian to be renewed in the *inner Man*, when the *outward Man* doth decay and perish, is the Character and Comfort of gracious Persons. That it is the Character, appears, because the contrary is true of wicked Persons; they are curs'd in Soul, who

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croſs'd in Body; their outward periſhings prove inward periſhings alſo; for then, uſually they murmur and repine; fret againſt *God* and Inſtruments; then, they think of ſinful ſhifts, and unlawful means to get out of trouble; when their *outward Man* is hurt by affliction, they hurt their Souls by ſin; by impatience and diſcontent, as that wicked King, who ſaid, what, ſhall I wait upon *God* any longer? but now we find the ſervants of the Lord, as *Eli*, *David*, *Job*, *Micah*, *Habakkuk* and others, when their outward comforts failed them, then they ſubmitted to the will of *God*, fled to him for ſupplies, truſted in him, and ſo by the exerciſe of their Faith and Patience, their Souls were ſupported and ſtrengthned. *David* expreſsly confeſſeth that it was good for him, that is, for his Soul, his *inner Man*, that he was afflicted. *Pſal.* 119. 71. And in the Text, we have the atteſtation of the Apoſtle and Primitive Chriſtians,

And this is the comfort alſo of *God*'s People, that their greateſt outward evils, through the goodneſs and bleſſing of *God*, turn to their greateſt inward good: and this makes them rejoyce in afflictions, and glory in tribulations; as *Rom.* 5. 2. to wit, becauſe of the Spiritual benefit they receive by afflictions, and upon this very ground, *God* gives that command, *Heb.* 12. 12. *Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down:* that is, therefore be comforted and encouraged. Therefore, wherefore? becauſe of the great profit and ſweet fruits of *God*'s chaſtnings upon his People: *Therefore lift up the hands that hang down.* As it is a comfort to a Man that hath a Wound in his Body, to have his Cloths torn off, that ſo his wound may be healed; ſo it is to have the diſeaſes of our Souls cured, tho' our outward comforts be rent and torn from us.

The Application.

I. *For Information.*

First, Hence it appears, that there is a great difference between the Godly and Ungodly, in reference to afflictions, between the upright and the hypocrite: The godly are the better, the wicked are the worse for affliction. The godly Man gains in his *inner Man*, by his losses in his *outward Man*: but the wicked in their afflictions commit more wickedness, and their Corruptions break out more, to the ruine of their Souls: The Righteous holdeth on his way, altho' Briers and Thorns, yea, Lyons be in his way, that tear and spoil all his outward Comforts; and he that hath clean Hands and a clean Heart, groweth stronger and stronger, even when his *outward Man* grows weaker and weaker: *Job* 17. 9. The wicked in affliction are, like the troubled Sea, that casts up nothing but mire and dirt. *Isa.* 57. 20.

Secondly, That an afflicted godly Person is in a far better case than an afflicted wicked Person, tho' the affliction be of the same kind, measure and degree; because an afflicted godly Person hath far better grounds of Comfort than the other: for the godly Man may be confident that his affliction, on his *outward Man*, shall tend to the good of his Soul; but the ungodly hath ground enough to fear, that he shall be the worse for his affliction: the wicked shall grow worse and worse. Tho' all things may happen alike to all, as to outward afflictions; yet the godly have the best on't upon this account, that their outward afflictions shall tend to their Inward, Spiritual and Eternal Good: O, happy are the People that are in such a case, that no Winds can

blow

blow amiss to them; but that all the cross and contrary winds that they meet with, upon the Stormy Sea of this World, shall but further them in their Passage, and hasten them to their Harbour in Heaven. Blessed be the Lord our God: *Amen.*

Thirdly, Then, a gracious person hath more and better ground of Patience, quietness and Contentation under all his afflictions than a wicked Person hath; because every gracious Person hath good ground to hope, believe and conclude, that, his good *God* is doing him good, doing his Soul good, by all the troubles on his *outward Man*; and having ground to hope, believe and conclude so, he hath good ground of Patience and Contentation. Now a Child of *God* hath good ground to hope, believe and conclude so; because he hath the faithful word of the true and faithful God, for to ground his Hope and Faith upon; who hath said, that all things shall work together for good to his People: if all things, then afflictions; *Rom.* 8. 28. And that all things are theirs; 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. things present, all their present sufferings and troubles are theirs; that is, shall work for their Spiritual good: and *God*'s word tells us expresly, *Hebr.* 12. 10. that all our chastisements are for our profit, our greatest profit; namely, to make us partakers of *God*'s Holiness; to purge away our Sins, *Isa.* 27. 9. to make us conformable to Christ; and to fit and prepare us for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, 2. *Cor.* 4. 17. Here we have a sure word of Promise; the *God* of Truth, who cannot Lye, the Almighty *God*, (who is able to perform his promises; which promises flow from his everlasting Love and unsearchable goodness & mercy, and are founded in the full satisfaction of Jesus Christ, in whom they are

made, and through whom they shall be fulfilled; to assure us of the truth of them.) I say the Almighty *God* hath engaged his word, that all the sufferings of his Children shall work for the good of their Souls; which is a most firm ground of Patience, Contentation and Consolation to them. When I can believe and be perswaded in my Soul, that all my afflictions shall promote the welfare of my Soul, I have all the reason in the World to be patient and content under them: Our great care must be to look to this, that we be the Heirs of the Promises; and if we be in Christ, really united to Christ, grafted into him, made partakers of his Spirit, Life, and Grace; then are we the Heirs of the Promises, *Hebr.* 6. 17, 18. *Gal.* 3. last: and we being the Heirs of the promises, we have grounds of Patience, because *God* hath promised all shall work for our good: and then next, that we may be able with patience to bear our afflictions, we must labour to keep these promises still in our eyes, looking to them, and to the love, goodness, faithfulness and all-sufficiency of *God* in them, and looking unto Jesus, through whose satisfaction and mediation they come to us, and labouring to keep our Eyes, the Eyes of Faith and Hope, fixed on those promises, trusting in *God*, and relying upon him; and so shall we be able in our Patience to possess our Souls: and Patience will do us great service in affliction, for altho' it cannot keep us from misery, it will keep us from being miserable: for we can never be miserable, so long as we have an interest in Christ, and through him, in the promises. Now Faith in the promises is both the breeder and feeder of Patience, let Faith live, and Patience will not dye: let Faith be present, and Patience will not be absent; and through Faith

and

and Patience we shall inherit the promises. Oh, then, let us labour to live by Faith, and strive to keep up our Faith in Act and Exercise; and in special, upon the real Spiritual Good, that our good *God* will bring to our *inner Man*, by the decays and perishings of our *outward*, he having promised so to do, and he being faithful who hath promised; and let us also labour to live in hopes and expectations of that good, praying also constantly for increase of our Faith and Hope, so shall we be able with Patience to endure to the end, and be saved.

Certainly it is every ones concernment, to know and consider, that Man consists of two Parts, the *inner* and *outer Man*, and which of the two is best, and ought to be most minded, and principally looked after? for most live, as if they had Bodies only, and no Souls; or, if they have Souls, that they need not much minding, but say, they leave the care of them to *God*: whereas indeed, it is the welfare, the safety and salvation of our Souls, that we all should be most solicious about. *What shall it profit a Man* (saith our Saviour) *if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?*

Sin is the Disease of the Soul, and Holiness the health of the Soul, and afflictions are *God's* Physick to effect this Cure by; surely then, we had better take the Physick, the Remedy, tho' it make us sick, than keep our Disease, which will make us Die, and that eternally: the Remedy is better than the Disease. So that when our merciful Father, the only wise *God*, sees, that the blastings and breakings of our outward Comforts, are proper means to keep us from, and to purge from us, our Spiritual Diseases, our sins, which not purged would destroy our *inner Man*, our Souls; and

therefore useth this means, what cause have we to endeavour in *God's* strength, patiently, quietly and comfortably, to bear all our breaches and perishings of our *outward Man*? yea, and to praise and bless the Lord, that he will take this course with us, thus to chasten us here in this World, that we may not be condemned with the World hereafter: 1 *Cor.* 11. 32.

Fourthly, It follows also from the Premises, that wicked Men are fools, very fools, yea, mad fools, and cruel to their own Souls, because all their care is for their Bodies, and none at all for their Souls; they provide for the Servant, but neglect the Master; provide for the Horse, but forget the Rider: *Eccl.* 10. 7. We have seen, how little care *God* takes of the *outward Man*, but beats and breaks that many times, that he may secure and preserve the *inner Man* of his People.

And also wicked Men are cruel to their own Souls. *Prov.* 8. 36. *He that sinneth against* God, wrongeth *his own Soul*. Is it not a madness, carefully to preserve the Box, but lose the Jewel? to spend precious time, strength, thoughts, cares, pains, all a Mans days, in feeding, cloathing, preserving the *outward Man*; but let the poor Soul starve, perish, and be eternally lost? if there be any cruelty out of Hell, this is a great piece of it.

Fifthly, It follows also, that the continuance of outward Comforts is not to be expected. There will be witherings, decays, perishings of our *outward Man*; it cannot be avoided: our health and ease, and peace, will not abide always with us; our dearest Relations must bid us farewel, this our earthly Tabernacle must shortly be put off; we cannot live always: all things here are mutable and changeable; we see this by experience every mo-

moment: our pleasant and lovely Companions in the flesh, our dearest friends in Christ, our Yoak-fellows, the desires of our Eyes, the comforts of our lives; they and we must part. *Psal.* 39. 6. This fully believed, and seriously considered, would unglue our affections from these things, and prepare us to part with them; that our parting with them be not so grievous to us, as usually it is. Could we use these things as we do our Gloves on our Hands, which we can with ease pluck off, and not as the skin on our Hands, which cannot be pulled off but with much pain and smart. It were good wisdom for us often to look on all our earthly comforts, as things that we cannot long enjoy; as things that we must needs shortly part with; this my health, my estate, my ease, my relations, I must part with, and I know not how soon, a parting time must come: This Soul and Body must part, and to keep such thoughts in our minds, and often to consider of it, would help to moderate our affections to them while we enjoy them, and to imploy them for *God*, and also it would prevent our immoderate sorrow for the loss of them, because we expected such losses, and made account of them before they came: but we are too often surprised, and therefore too often overcome with sorrow.

Sixthly, It follows from the premises, that the Servants of *God* have no true cause or reason to be discouraged, disquieted or dejected, when their *outward Man* perisheth, their outward Comforts wither, their old House begins to totter and decay; because by all these witherings and perishings of their *outward Man*, their *inner Man* is renewed day by day; and therefore, no cause of fainting.

Such as know, that is, are assured by Faith, that when this their earthly Tabernacle shall be dissolved,

that

that they have a building with God, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, such will not be troubled when their Houses of Clay begin to totter; no, but rather, they groan earnestly to be cloathed upon with their House which is from Heaven. 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3. And that *God's* Servants may thus be willing to put off their earthly Tabernacles, and exchange them for Heavenly Houses, *God* is working upon them, and in them, this willingness, as *Verse* 5, by his Spirit, his Word, and by his Chastisements, breaking and blasting their earthly Comforts, weakning their bodies, to make them willing to leave them, and to long for those everlasting habitations, which their dear Lord hath prepared for them; *John* 14. 1, 2, 3. And for the more effectual working of *God's* People to this willingness, he gives unto them the earnest of the Spirit, which is the earnest of their Inheritance, untill the Redemption of the purchased Possession, *Eph.* 1. 13, 14. and *Rom.* 8. 23. We which have received the First-fruits of the Spirit groan within our selves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Bodies.

Now this Earnest or First-fruits of the Spirit, which in some measure *God* gives to all his people here in this life, to prepare them for Glory, is called also the Seal of the Spirit, *Ephes.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed.* Now, this Seal of the Spirit, I take to be, the saving Works, Graces and Fruits of the Spirit in us; as the Work of true and found illumination, true Conviction of our Sin and Misery, and of the Creatures Vanity; of our own impotency and utter insufficiency to help or save our selves; and of Christ's Excellency, All-sufficiency and willingness to save all such as come unto

unto him, and are heartily willing to take him for their onely Lord and Saviour; all this is the work of the Spirit: As also, sound Conversion from all Sin unto God, as the chief good; the Spirit enabling the Soul to repent and turn to *God*; and also working in the Soul the Grace of Faith, enabling it to come to Christ, to receive him, accept of him, rest upon him, and to resign it self up sincerely to him and to his Government, by his Word and Spirit. The Spirit works Sanctification in the Soul, destroying the old corrupt Principles of Nature, and implanting new Principles of spiritual Life, making it partaker of the Divine Nature; mortifying in it the lusts of the flesh, and quickning it to newness of life; repairing the Image of *God* upon it, and working all those other Graces, which are the Conditions of Pardon and Justification; as true love to *God* and *Christ*, to his Word and People; true Fear of *God*, sorrow for, and hatred of Sin; producing those Fruits mentioned, *Galat.* 5. 22, 23. as *Patience*, *Meekness*, *Humility*, and the like. Also the Spirit helps the Soul to act those Graces, and to perform those Duties required of us, in order to our Salvation: It guides and leads, and teacheth us, helps our Infirmities, teacheth us to pray, and carrieth on the whole work of Sanctification in us. And this I take to be the Seal of the Spirit; when those saving Impressions and Habits of Grace and holiness are wrought in and upon the Soul, whereby the Soul is made in some measure like unto *Christ Jesus*, being by the Spirit united to him, planted and grafted in him, and by vertue of its union with him, made partakers of his Life and Grace, whereby it lives and grows, until it come to the State of Perfection in the other World.

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This Spirit thus savingly working, is *God's Seal upon our Hearts*, the Seal of his *everlasting love to our Souls*, and of his *everlasting Covenant* which he hath entred into with us; which he will never deface or blot out; and it is also the *Earnest of our Inheritance*; that thereby we may confidently conclude to our great comfort, that, as sure as he hath given us his Spirit, thus savingly to work in us those gracious Works, this gracious Change, this true Repentance, and Faith and Love, and Holiness, and other Graces; even so sure he will give us the Inheritance in Heaven at last: as surely as he hath sanctified us, so surely he hath justified us, and will glorifie us: For this is the Seal, this is the Earnest. And upon this account saith the Apostle, *Having this Seal, this Earnest, this comfortable Assurance of a better state, and of a better life after this, we groan earnestly to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven*; That we may possess that glorious purchased Inheritance, of which we now have the earnest; we long to enjoy the full Harvest, of which we have received the First-fruits, and consequently, we that have received these First-fruits, this blessed Earnest, have no cause to be troubled or disquieted, when these our earthly Tabernacles begin to decay and perish; because we are wrought by *God's Spirit* for a better state; and, as was said, not only the *Spirit of God worketh this willingness to die*, by working those Graces in the Soul, as you see; but also accompanying Afflictions, and blessing them, to crucifie our Affections to earthly things, and helps to Holiness in order to our eternal Happiness; and therefore also ought the more patiently to be endured.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Then it is the choicest wisdom in the World, for every one of us to labour to become real Saints, to get into a state of saving Grace; and often to search and try our selves, and never to give over searching and trying, until we come to some well-grounded Assurance, That we are indeed truly Regenerated, and that we have a real Interest in *Jesus Christ*; for this Assurance may be attained, and we are commanded to give *all diligence to attain it*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. It is not bare wishes or desires will serve the turn, but we must labour and strive after it, and be much in self-examination, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. How is it possible we can have any true comfort living or dying, if we have no Assurance of a better Life; and so long as we know not whether we shall go to Heaven or Hell, when we die: We all have been too negligent in labouring after this Assurance; let us lament it, and let us all now begin to bestir our selves, and in *God's* strength lay out our utmost care and pains in the use of all means to get the clear evidences of our peace with *God*, and that we are in a pardoned and reconciled state, for upon this Assurance, we shall have this Advantage above all others, that we shall not be troubled nor much disquieted, when our outward man doth decay and perish, our earthly comforts fail us, our bodily Members wither, because all these decays and wastings do but make way, and prepare us for the happiness of our Souls. Whereas, on the contrary, it must needs be an uncomfortable thing, to look upon a decaying Body, and be altogether uncertain what will become of the Soul when it leaves this Body; it must needs make Death terrible. But when we know that our

our Souls at death shall enter into our Master's joy, we shall bid Death welcom.

The Eighth Inference.

From what hath been said, we may draw one Rule of Tryal to us all, whereby we may know whether we be true real *Christians* or no, or only nominal, and but formal Professors, *viz.* by the real good to our Souls that our Afflictions have done us; we all have had Afflictions of one kind or other; let us examine what spiritual good we have got by them: look over the former Particulars, and apply them.

It is a true sign of a Child of *God*, to be the better for *Prosperity* and *Adversity*, and commonly more the better for *Adversity* than for *Prosperity*.

But lest we should be mistaken, I grant, that Affliction may work some good in the Hypocritical Professors, as on *Ahab* and *Nineveh*. But note these Differences.

First, On the *Godly*, Afflictions work good mostly on their *inward man*, on their Souls; although they work good also on their Conversations, the sweet fruits of Afflictions appear also in their Lives. But on others, if Afflictions do work any good at all, it is mostly on their *outward man*, they may by them be outwardly reclaimed and reformed, but not inwardly renewed and sanctified. Now there is a vast difference between outward Reformation and inward Renovation.

2dly, The fruit of Affliction on the Godly is continually increasing and growing; it is renewing *day by day*; as in the Text. But the Fruit of Affliction upon others, is like a *morning dew*, or *early*

early cloud, which the Sun-blaſt of Proſperity dries all up, and blows all off. Thoſe ſeeming Fruits of Humility, of Senſibleneſs, Patience, Inclinations to good Duties, Reſolutions againſt Sin, &c. which appear in ſome in time of their Affliction, are all blaſted and withered again, when their Afflictions are removed, *Hoſ.* 6. 4.

Thirdly, The Fruit of Affliction upon the Godly is more afterward than at preſent, *Heb.* 12. 11. but on others 'tis moſt at preſent, even while the Affliction is upon them; then they will ſeek *God early and earneſtly*: but when the Affliction is over, they grow remiſs and careleſs. And oh, that this were not the fault of too many of the Godly! It is the After-fruit of Righteouſneſs, the exemplary Holineſs of our Lives afterwards, that is the good Fruit of ſanctified Afflictions, which we muſt bring forth, to evidence the Love of our Father to us in his Chaſtnings of us, and our ſpiritual Profit by thoſe Chaſtiſements. It is not ſo much how we behave our ſelves in the time of our Afflictions, (though that muſt be minded alſo, and careful we muſt be to carry our ſelves as Chriſtians under the Croſs;) for an *Ahab* may then behave himſelf well: but the great matter is, how we carry our ſelves after our Afflictions; that then we bear and bring forth the quiet and peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs; that we ſhew forth in our Converſations, the ſingular good and ſpiritual profit that we have got by our Afflictions; that we are become more holy, more heavenly, humble, meek, lowly, more tender-hearted, more watchful and circumſpect, more zealous of good works, more charitable, more careful in all things to pleaſe *God*. This is that will clearly prove,

That

That Afflictions have done us good, and then we shall have cause to bless *God* for them.

Fourthly, The promised Good and Blessing of Affliction, is the main thing which the gracious Soul mostly desireth, prayeth for, and hopes and expects: Thus he breaths; O, that this stroke may be a stroke of Love; O, that this Affliction may do good to my *inward man*; O, that my Soul may flourish and prosper, and be a Gainer by all my outward Losses and Crosses: O, that my Soul may be purged in those Fires, and cleansed in those Waters of Affliction, that I may bring forth all the blessed Fruits of Affliction; and O, that *God* would accomplish all his gracious ends upon my Soul, by his Chastisements: but it is not so with others; they cry, Lord, remove thy hand, take away my Affliction.

Fifthly, The gracious Soul understands *God's* design in Affliction, and earnestly desires to know the whole Mind of *God*, and why the Lord contendeth with him; and hears the Voice of his Rod, searcheth for his Sin, for the Plague of his own Heart, repents and turns to God throughly, casts away the Idols of his heart, resolves against his Corruptions; prays and hopes for the blessing of his Affliction; and thereupon he labours to submit to the holy Will of God, and patiently to bear his Afflictions. But it is not so with others, they are not sollicitous about the attaining of this spiritual good to their Souls; so they can get off the Affliction, they care for no more: Whereas the gracious Soul is afraid that he shall lose the benefit of his Afflictions, and therefore is most earnest with God for it.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, The gracious Soul seeks a Reparation of all his Losses, and a Balance to all his Troubles in *God* through *Christ*, and in *God's Covenant*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. and there he finds it in some measure, which stayeth and quieteth him: When the streams of all Creature-comforts fail him, he repairs to God the Fountain, and there he lies for all Supplies, *Psalm* 31. 14. *Psalm* 142. 4, 5. *Refuge failed me, no man cared for my Soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.* But the Ungodly are strangers to this course in the time of their trouble.

Now these things considered, we may by them attain in some measure the knowledge of our estate, whether we be godly or no; in a state of Grace or no; to wit, by the real good our Souls have gotten by our bodily troubles.

So much for Information.

II. The second *Use* is of *Counsel* to *God's Afflicted People*, when their earthly Comforts wither and decay.

1. Bear the *Indignation of the Lord*, take his blows with patience, acknowledge his hand, stoop and submit to his Will; He is your gracious, wise, merciful Father that smites you; he intends you no hurt; He that loves you better than you can love your selves; He that Redeemed you, and he that knows what is best for you; He that intends all for your good, and will cause all things to work for your good; therefore in your *patience possess ye your Souls*, and quietly submit to his good Will.

2. *Search*

2. *Search your Hearts and try your Ways, and turn to him that smiteth you*; Commune with your own Hearts, call to remembrance your neglects of Duty to God and Man, your neglect of the Souls of your Relations, your careless performance of holy Duties, your mis-spending your Talents, your earthly and unprofitable Discourses, &c. This is a time for Heart-searching, a time for *the trying of your ways*, Lamentat. 3. 40. *In the day of Adversity consider*: Consider wherefore God afflicts you, consider what you have done against God, and what your present Duty is: Repent of your former miscarriages, humble your selves under God's mighty hand, and act Faith on the Lord Jesus for Remission, and by Faith labour to draw strength of Grace to reform and amend; and so comply with God's design in his Corrections, which is to take away your Sin, and to make you partakers of his Holiness.

3. In your Afflictions consult *God's Word*, and be conversant therein, and conform thereto; Now learn *to keep God's Precepts*, Psalm 119. 67. Now set *straight steps to your feet*, Heb. 12. 12. In *God's Word* you will find sweet Counsels and Consolations, precious Promises, encouraging Examples of *Faith and Patience*, supporting, quickning and strengthning Arguments: Had it not been for *God's Word*, David *had perished in his affliction*. O, therefore now study the Scriptures, and make them your Meditation Night and Day, acquaint your selves with *God's Word*, and apply it, and yield up your selves to the obedience of it: holy *Job* in his Affliction, esteemed the *Word of God above his necessary Food*; and *David*, *above Gold and Silver*.

4. Learn

4. Learn and comply with God's Designs in chastening you; His main Designs are these; To take away our Sin, Isa. 27. 9. He takes away our *Isaacs*, to destroy our *Dalilahs*; he removes the desire of our Eyes, to consume the Defilements of our Hearts; God designs the purifying of us, to make us clean and holy, and fit Vessels for himself to dwell in, to make us partakers of his holiness, and conformable to his Son; to make our Souls better; to draw us off from all our *Idols*, and to draw us nearer to himself, and to prevent our sinning here, and our condemnation with the World hereafter. O blessed, gracious Ends our heavenly Father hath in all his Chastisements of us; now it's our Duty to comply with these his Ends, and pursue them with utmost diligence.

Quest. But how shall we pursue those Ends?

Answ. First, by deep and serious Meditation upon those few special things fit to be thought on in Affliction.

1. Think seriously on the meritorious Causes of your Affliction; search for your Sins; let your Spirits make diligent search for your Sins; for now God is searching for your Sins, *Job* 10. 6. and we should set in with him, and think how greatly you have provoked him, how unkindly you have dealt with him; against what Light and Love, and Mercy you have sinned; and think also upon the desert of your Sins; you are now under outward Afflictions, but where had you been, if God had dealt with you according to your Deserts? Call to mind your Sins, and repent, and reform?

2. Think seriously on the Designs of God in all your Troubles, what good Intentions God hath in

in them; that he aims at nothing but your real spiritual, and eternal good: If he break your earthly Comforts, waste your Estates and Bodies, it is for the good of your Souls; be perswaded of this, consider it, and lay it to heart.

3. Think seriously of the Love of God in Christ to you, in all your Afflictions; they come from his Fatherly Love, he sees that you need them, that your Souls will perish without them, and that he doth chastise you, because he loves you, and because you are his Children.

4. Think also, how infinitely better God deals with you, than with others, whom he chasteneth not here, but reserves them for the Wrath to come, unto everlasting Destruction; in comparison of which, all your heaviest Afflictions here are not as much as Flea-bitings.

5. Think also upon the many exceeding great and precious Promises which God hath made to you, for your support: As, *that he will be with you; will never leave you; that all shall work together for your good; that he will uphold you*: and many such.

6. Think seriously and deeply on that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, for which all your Afflictions do prepare you. Thus be much in Meditation on those things.

Lastly, Think upon *the Sufferings of Christ* for you; *his bitter Agony, and bloody Sweat in the Garden; his cruel, cursed, shameful, painful Death on the Cross*, Isa. 53. 10. Thus if we exercise our Thoughts in these Considerations, it will help us to the attaining the gracious Ends of God in his Chastisements,

Secondly,

Secondly, As by *Meditation*, so by *Prayer* we must pursue God's Ends: Now pray, *pray continually*, *pray without ceasing*; pray most earnestly, most fervently; strive and wrestle with God in Prayer, as *Jacob did for the Blessing*; so should we pray, and continue *instant in prayer*, that God would accomplish all his blessed Designs upon our Souls, and perform his whole Work.

Thirdly, By *Faith in Christ*, and *in the Promises*; for no Blessing comes to the Soul any way, but *in* and *by Jesus Christ*; and only *in* and *through him are the Promises fulfilled*: Therefore in all our Afflictions, we must look unto *Jesus*, as unto him, through whose hands the Affliction comes upon us; for all our Afflictions come through his hand; and the blessing of them comes through his hand also; act *Faith* on all that *Jesus* hath done and suffered for you; and upon what he is doing for you in Heaven; and upon what gracious Promises he hath made to you: and the more you can act *Faith on Christ*, the more you will love him; and the more you love him, the more patiently and comfortably you will bear his Chastisements; as knowing that they proceed from his *Love to you*, Rev. 3. 19.

III. *The last Use is for Consolation*: The *Text* and *Doctrine* is very full of Comfort. If this be a Truth that I have held out; *That the perishings and wastings of the outward man, of the People of God, tend to the renewing of their inward man*; then let none of *God's People* be discouraged or dejected, whatever Afflictions befal them; Poverty, Sickness, Restraint, loss of Relations, Estates: Remember and consider, what great Spiritual Good all shall certainly produce to you, and what a gracious

cious issue all your Afflictions shall have upon you; and therefore faint not, nor be weary; but be quiet and comforted.

Quest. *But when may we take Comfort in our Afflictions?*

Answ. 1. When God's smiting you, works in you *true turning unto God*, Isa. 9. 13. Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. for then *Affliction* proceeds from God's Love, and turns to your good. O, the yerning Bowels of God towards returning Sinners.

2. When by Chastisements we are made partakers of God's Holiness, made more holy, and more conformable to Christ than formerly, *Heb.* 12. 10.

3. When God's Soveraignty works in us Silence and submission; as in *Eli*, *David*, and others.

4. When God's Rods on us make us more obedient to his Law, *Psalm.* 94. 12. 13. and 119. 67. 71.

5. When God's Righteousness in what he doth, gives quietness and satisfaction to the Soul; as *Dan.* 9 14. *Nehem.* 9. 33.

6. When *Afflictions* put us upon Self-examination, and searchings for our Sins; *Lam.* 3. 40. *Gen.* 42. 21.

7. When in *Afflictions* we can see God's faithfulness, making good his Promises, *Psalm* 119. 75. He hath promised to *withhold no good thing*.

8. When we hope and believe, that God will give us more, and better things, than those he takes from us, *2 Chron.* 25. 9. *Psalm* 90. 14, 15. *Isa.* 35. 6.

9. When God's *Wisdom* contents us; that because God is only wise, and knows best, what is best for

for us, this contents us, *Isa.* 28. 27, 28. Infinite Wisdom hath ordered it.

10. When we can firmly believe that God's Love is in all his Chastisements, *Heb.* 12. 6. All these things will produce Comfort in all our Afflictions; especially when we can see these Effects in some measure brought forth in us, we may conclude, that God's gracious Design prospers in us.

Could we but find that our *inward man* grows better, and that we grow and flourish in Grace, when our *outward man* doth decay and perish, we should not faint.

The good Lord grant that this may be the good Effect of all my Afflictions.

Amen.

So much of the First Part.

D PART

PART II.

Orthodox Paradox:

OR, THE

Greatest Temporal Evil working the greatest Eternal Good.

2 COR. iv. 17.

For our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.

THIS the *Apostle* brings in as a Reason of that holy Courage that he and the *Primitive Christians* had under all their Troubles, *that they did not faint*, but rather, *they got strength*; and as their *outward man* perished, their Souls

Souls, their better part, flouriſhed and proſpered; as in the foregoing Verſe: *For* (ſaith he) *our light Affliction*, &c.

In which Reaſon or Argument we may obſerve,

1. The Nature of the Saints Troubles; they are *Afflictions*.

2. The Qualities of them; they are *light*, and but for a *moment*.

3. The Tendency of them, or their ſubſerviency to their eternal good, through God's bleſſing on them; they *work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*.

1. For the Nature of the Saints Troubles, they are *Afflictions*, and our *Afflictions*: All the Saints Troubles in this Life are *Afflictions*, and but *Afflictions*; they are not properly Puniſhments, inflicted on them, to make Satisfaction for Sin. They are not *Deſtructions*, no; they are but *Afflictions*. The original word is Θλίψις, which ſignifieth a preſſing, from the effect of them on the Saints; for they are ſent to preſs out their hidden Corruptions, that were in the Heart undiſcovered; to make manifeſt that which lay hid before. *Affliction* is as God's Wine-preſs alſo, to preſs out the ſweet Wine of Grace, that it may appear in Act and Exerciſe. It is alſo God's Fullers-preſs, to preſs out the inward ſpots and defilements of their Souls. *Afflictions* are not to the Saints Executions of Vengeance, not Deſtructions, as they are to others, Deſtruction upon Deſtruction; that is, one Trouble and Diſtreſs upon another; ſo they are to the Wicked.

2. They are our *Affliction* too: this may note, firſt, the commonneſs of them to all men, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. No Temptation befals us, but what is common to Men, to all Men, and moſtly, to all Saints; it is their Lot, their Portion; yea, it is

God's Gift to them, *Phil.* 1. 29. Secondly, It may note the Propriety the Saints have in their *Afflictions*, and Benefit they have by them. Theſe *Afflictions* are ours, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *All things are yours, things preſent*: the preſent *Afflictions* are ours; that is, they are ſanctified, and made profitable to us; they are our Friends, Friends to our Souls, not our Foes; they are our Helps, not our Harms; they are ours in common alſo; they are the Churches Troubles; others ſympathize with us, and they count our Afflictions theirs.

And if this be ſo, what reaſon have we to faint and ſink under our Troubles, ſeeing they are but Afflictions, not Deſtructions, and ſeeing they are ours alſo, for our good and advantage, appointed and ordered to us by the loving Hand of our only-wiſe God and gracious Father: and ſeeing all the People of God have a ſhare in them, by way of ſympathy, and we have a ſhare in their Prayers for us, therefore we faint not.

2. The ſecond Branch of this Argument is the Quality of thoſe Afflictions, expreſſed here by two words, 1. *They are light*, ἐλαφρὸν, *leve*; the ſame word in *Mat.* 11. 30. *My burden is light*; that is, it is tolerable, ſufferable, ſuch as may be endured and ſuffered: Chriſt's Government is not intolerable, neither are the Afflictions of his People.

Object. But how can that be, that the Troubles of God's People are light? Were *David*'s Troubles light, from whom we often hear ſuch ſad and bitter Complaints? And were *Job*'s Troubles light, *Job* 6. 3, 4. And were the Primitive Chriſtians Troubles light? See the 7th and 8th Verſes of this Chapter; and elſewhere the Apoſtle com-

complains, that they were preſſed above meaſure, and deſpaired even of Life?

Anſw. The meaning plainly is comparative; *Afflictions* are light, not ſimply conſidered in themſelves, but by way of compariſon; as thus.

1. They are *light*, in compariſon of what our Sins have deſerved. Sin deſerves Eternal Death, everlaſting Flames in Hell, everlaſting Deſtruction, eaſeleſs, endleſs, remedileſs Torments. The Wages of Sin is Death, eternal Damnation, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 8, 9. Now, in compariſon of Hell and Damnation, all our Afflictions are but light, but as Fleabitings to thoſe eternal Torments: Oh, what is the Wrath of Man to the Wrath of a GOD? What is the Diſpleaſure of a Father to the Revenge of an Enemy? Oh, what is Sickneſs, Poverty, a Priſon, Loſſes, &c. to Hell-fire?

2. They are light, in compariſon of the cruel, bitter, dreadful Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God. He, upon whom the Spirit of Might did reſt, was even ſunk by them; if we do but duly conſider Chriſt's Sufferings, his bloody, bitter Agony in the Garden, when his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful even to death, he was ſore amazed; when all the Sins of the Eleſt were laid on him, made to meet on him, *Iſa.* 53. 6. all the Wrath of Men and Devils on him, yea, and which was heavieſt of all, his Father's Wrath was on him; it pleaſed the Father to bruiſe him, and to put him to grief, *Iſa.* 53. 10. All this would have ſunk Ten thouſand Worlds; this made our deareſt Lord ſweat great drops of Blood, &c. Oh, the inconceivable love of our Bleſſed Jeſus! O, the curſed nature of Sin! But what are all our Afflictions, all our Sufferings, in compariſon of Chriſt's? He was

afflicted, he was *oppressed*, infinitely more than ever any man was, or can be.

3. *Light* too, in comparison of what the Wicked shall suffer hereafter: see *Psal.* 11. 6. *2 Thess.* 1. 9. *Revel.* 21. 8. Our *Afflictions* are light, surely very light in comparison of these.

4. *Light* also in comparison of the Glory that *God's Suffering Saints* shall afterwards enjoy. This our Apostle affirms, *Rom.* 8. 18. *I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* Not worthy to be compared with that far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory. Thus are our *Afflictions* said to be light.

2. Another Quality of our *Afflictions* noted here, is, That our *Afflictions* are short also: as they are light, so they are short too, παρεργον, *momentany, for a moment.*

Object. But how can this be? Did not *David* complain, that he was *afflicted* from his Youth, and the Church in *Affliction* four hundred years at once? How then are their *Afflictions* short?

Answ. This *for a moment*, or short time, must be understood comparatively also; Our *Afflictions* are short, and *for a moment*, in comparison of what the Damned must suffer; for their Death is eternal, their Destruction is everlasting, everlasting Damnation in Hell, the Fire never goeth out, the *Worm never dyeth.* But especially, our *Afflictions* here are short, as well as light in comparison of that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, that the Saints shall possess hereafter.

Observe the *Antithesis*, or opposition here in the Text, which duly considered, and Faith acted on it,

is

is enough to ſupport a Chriſtian under all his Troubles. Mark it well.

For *Afflictions* here, he ſhall have *Glory* hereafter; for *light Afflictions* he ſhall have a *weight of Glory*; for *ſhort Afflictions* an *eternal weight of Glory*; yea, *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*: in compariſon of which *Afflictions*, all our *Afflictions* may well be termed light and ſhort.

Let us ſeriouſly conſider how ſtrangely and wonderfully the Happineſs of Suffering Saints is here ſet out by the Apoſtle.

1. It is *Glory*, it is *Glory* that they ſhall receive hereafter, a *Crown of Glory*, that fadeth not away. It is *Glory* that they ſeek for, *Rom.* 2. 6, 7. and it is *Glory* they ſhall have. Here in this World the poor Chriſtian meets with ſhame and diſhonour, laden with Reproaches, made the off-ſcouring of all things, trodden down as Mire in the Streets, the Song of Drunkards; but hereafter they ſhall be advanced to *Glory*: what this *Glory* imports, I ſhall enquire hereafter. It is ſurely a Soul-ſupporting, a Soul-ſatisfying thing.

2. It is a *weight of Glory*: Not a grain or ſcruple, (though a little of this *Glory* will abundantly recompenſe all our Sufferings in the way to it) but it is a *weight of Glory*, enough to fill all the Faculties of the whole Soul, enough to ſatisfie the vaſt Deſires of the Mind, which the whole Creation cannot do; yea, enough to ſink the Soul under the weight of it, did not the Almighty Power of God uphold it.

3. It is *eternal* alſo: The glorified Saints ſhall never be unglorified again: it is everlaſting Glory.

4. It is *an exceeding weight of Glory*: ſurmounting, ſurpaſſing, and tranſcending, not only our Merits, but our Deſires, our Thoughts and Ima-

ginations, *Epheſ.* 3. 20. and of which it may be ſaid, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Myſteries of the Goſpel, that *it never entred into the heart of man to conceive*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9.

5. It is a *more exceeding*: it is a marvellous Glory; what a Climax, what a Gradation is here!

6. A *far more exceeding*: it exceeds all our Deſires, all our Thoughts, it is more than we can ask or think; it exceeds all our Doings, all our Sufferings, more than Heaven exceeds Earth, or Light Darkneſs, or any thing we can imagine: καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολήν. This *Glory* is excellent, ſuper-excellent, beyond all meaſure excellent. Now, in compariſon of this excellent Glory, all our preſent Sufferings are but light and ſhort; and if ſo, is there any reaſon the Saints ſhould faint under them, but rather to bear up, and be of good courage?

3. The third Branch of this Argument is, the Influence that theſe ſhort and light *Afflictions* have upon this *Glory*, or the Reference they have unto it, or Tendency towards it; and that is very conſiderable, and it is this: Thoſe *Afflictions* work for us this tranſcendent *Glory*. It is no where ſaid, that Honours, or Pleaſures, or Riches work for us this Glory, but *Afflictions* work it; that is, the only-wiſe God, who can bring Light out of Darkneſs, Sweet out of Bitter, Good out of Evil; even He ſo ordereth and bleſſeth all the *Afflictions* of his People to them, that they become ſingularly uſeful, and influential, to work out for them this *Glory*: but not as the Papiſts hold, who abuſe this as they do other Scriptures, concluding hence, that the Saints Sufferings, as well as their Doings, do merit *Glory*; for this was not St. *Paul*'s meaning, becauſe he ſpeaks to the contrary, *Rom.* 8. 18. *I reckon*

reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed. Glory is Chriſt's Purchace, not Man's Merit.

But *Afflictions* work for us this Glory, by way of Preparation for it, as a way and means (though not the only and principal) which our gracious God appoints, ordereth, and ſanctifieth, to fit and prepare his People, for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* It was by the way of Suffering that our Lord, the Lord of Glory, went to his Glory; *Luk.* 24. 26. *Heb.* 2. 10. And therefore, ſeeing *Afflictions* have ſuch a reference, ſubſerviency, and tendency to Glory, that they are made uſeful to fit and prepare us for this moſt bleſſed, moſt excellent ſtate of Happineſs and Glory, we faint not under them, but rather we are encouraged and ſtrengthned by the conſideration of their tendency to prepare us for our eternal Happineſs.

Now let us put all theſe pieces together, and they will yield us this comfortable Doctrinal Concluſion, *viz.*

Doct. *That the light and ſhort Afflictions of the People of God here in this World, are ſingularly uſeful to work them for, and to work for them, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory in the World to come.*

This is ſo plainly aſſerted here by the Apoſtle, I need not ſtand to prove it; all I have to do, is to demonſtrate, and ſhew, how thoſe light and ſhort *Afflictions* of God's People, are thus ſingularly uſeful and influential to work them for, and to work for them, this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; which, by the aſſiſtance of God, I ſhall endeavour to do.

But before I begin this, it may not be amiſs to ſay a little (and I can ſay but a little, a very little, for I know very little) of this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:* And ſhall I ſpeak before I know? Lord, open my Underſtanding, and pardon my Ignorance.

By this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, I underſtand, all that wonderful Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs, which the great and glorious God hath prepared for, and promiſed unto his Children, and which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by his precious Blood and Paſſion, hath purchaſed for them, which chiefly conſiſts in their advancement and admiſſion into the neareſt enjoyment of the great and glorious God, the Chiefeſt Good, to be ever with the Lord, to ſee his Face, to know him as we are known of him, to live for ever with him, partaking of his Glory to their everlaſting Conſolation. But, alas! how ſhort and ſhallow are my Apprehenſions of what I am writing? 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. If it did not appear to the beloved Diſciple, what Happineſs the Saints ſhould be advanced to, at the laſt, but only in general, that when Chriſt appears, we ſhall be like him; No marvel if ſuch a poor blind Worm as I know ſo little; yet ſome glimpſes we have in the Glaſs of the Goſpel, whereby we may come to a little dark Knowledge, and a ſlight taſte of this Glory.

It is the Souls enjoyment of God, the chief Good, and that is the ſum and ſubſtance of all Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs; this is called, *Seeing God, Matth.* 5. 8. *Pſal.* 17. 15. *Revel.* 22. 4. *Beholding the glory of Chriſt, John* 17. 24. *Seeing God face to face*; that is, as far as Creatures are capable. See the Prayer of Chriſt, which doth notably expreſs this *weight of Glory, Joh.* 17. 21, 22, 23.

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That they all may be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us; and the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; that the world may know that thou haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me. What can be more deſired? Here is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory indeed; a real Union of the Saints with the Bleſſed God, and the Bleſſed Jeſus, ſuch a Union as is between the Head and the Members, and between Huſband and Wife; yea, ſuch as is between God and Chriſt, and a participation of the ſame Glory that Chriſt himſelf doth poſſeſs, and an enjoyment of the ſame Love that Chriſt himſelf doth enjoy; yea, the Saints ſhall then be made like unto Chriſt, both in Soul and Body. "Lord, help me "to believe all this, and to be fully perſwaded "of it, that my Heart may be kindly affected, and "filled with enflamed affections towards my Bleſſed "Jeſus, who hath purchaſed all this Glory for us "with his moſt precious Blood: Oh, let me at-"tain the full aſſurance of my true Title thereto, "that I may praiſe thee, and may long for the "full poſſeſſion of it: O my baſe unbelieving "Heart! Lord, ſubdue my unbelief: Oh, what "pains ſhould we take to be aſſured of this Glory? "and, how patiently and cheerfully ſhould we bear "our Afflictions, that are deſigned to prepare us "for it?

But I cannot break off here. This *weight of Glory* is, by the Holy Ghoſt, in the Scripture repreſented to us, by all the moſt excellent and delightful things among Men, ſpeaking to our Capacities, and after the manner of Men. Hence it is called a *Kingdom*; *It is your Father's good pleaſure* (ſaith our Lord) *to give you a Kingdom: I appoint*

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unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven, a Kingdom that cannot be moved; a Kingdom of Glory; a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away; a Crown of Righteousness; a Crown of Life: Christ hath made us Kings and Priests to God. Here in this World the Saints have the Cross, Fire, Faggot, Halters, Gibbets, *&c.* let them wait but a while, and they shall hear the Judge of the whole World say unto them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* Now you are abused, reproached, imprisoned, impoverished, despised; shortly you shall all be crowned.

This Glory is called the *Inheritance of the Saints in light*, an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you: You that now may have no House nor Home of your own, no certain Dwelling-place; and you that now dwell in Houses of Clay, tottering every moment, being the Children of God, you shall shortly enter into everlasting Habitations, and possess those glorious Mansions in the Father's House; you shall shortly inhabit that *House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens:* God hath prepared for you a City that hath Foundations of his own building and making: Hold out *Faith* and *Patience*, you shall shortly be translated into the Paradise of GOD, above the reach of Men and Devils.

Moreover, (for methinks it is good to be here) when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, we shall also appear with him in Glory; with Palms in our Hands, and Crowns on our Heads, and with everlasting Joy and Songs of Praises in our Hearts and Mouths. This Glory is called Life, Everlasting Life, Eternal Salvation, Everlasting Peace,

Peace, and Everlaſting Reſt, the purchaſed Poſſeſſion, that which coſt the moſt precious Blood of the only Son of God to procure, ſurely it muſt be *a far more exceeding weight of Glory*, that coſt ſuch a price; this Glory is the Fruit of Chriſt's Blood, and of all his cruel Sufferings: Oh, that ſome Beams of it might be darted in upon my dark Heart by the Spirit, while I am writing this, to quicken and enlarge it.

It is Everlaſting Reſt, ——— Reſt from all Sin, the greateſt burden to a gracious Soul; and from all Sufferings; from all doubts of God's love; from all ſenſe of God's Diſpleaſure; from all Temptations of Satan, of the World and Fleſh; Reſt from all Perſecutions: Now they that have ſuffered with Chriſt, ſhall be glorified with him; no Priſons, Baniſhments, Burnings, Hangings, Quarterings, then; Reſt from all our ſad and ſinful Diviſions, and from all our perſonal Sufferings, Pains, Diſeaſes, Loſſes of dear Relations, ill Tydings; Reſt from all Vain Thoughts, from all the pain of Duty, from all our Labours.

Let us a little further conſider, I. The Preparatives to this Glory; and, II. The Properties of it, that ſo our Hearts may be the more affected with it, and the more carried out with all Love and Deſires after him that purchaſed it for us, and with all labour and diligence to ſecure our title to it; and may alſo the better bear all our Afflictions, which prepare us for it, and lead us to it.

I. Of the Preparations to this Glory; and theſe are,

1. The *glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, *Tit.* 2. 13. Our bleſſed Lord will moſt certainly come again from Heaven,

ven, with Power and great Glory, attended by his mighty Angels, to receive his People to himself, that *where* he *is*, *there* they *may be also*, Joh. 14. 3. to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all those that believe, 2 *Thess.* 1. 10. Alas, what Comfort should we have in this life, if it were not for the Hope of Christ's second coming? He will not leave us here still, sinning, suffering, groaning, dying; no, no, the day of our full Redemption will come; our Lord will come again, and set all his poor Captives free; but a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry; He will come for our Salvation, *Heb.* 9. 28.

And for our great Comfort, let us know and believe, that however we now live as Lambs amongst Wolves, when our glorious Lord Jesus, the Lord of Glory, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, *the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. It should be then the Character of a Christian, as it is his Duty to love, to long, and look and wait for the Son of God from Heaven, even Jesus, whom he *raised from the dead*, which by bearing the most dreadful Wrath of his Father, hath delivered us from the Wrath to come, 1 *Thess.* 1. 10. *Act.* 1. 12. And while we are on Earth, we should *have our conversations in Heaven, and from thence look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body*, *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. being assured, that then we shall receive that *Crown of Righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give at that day, to all those that love his appearing*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. Oh then, seeing we look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all manner of holy Conversation and Godliness, giving all diligence, that we

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may be found of him in Peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs? O, what unſpeakable Comfort will the Coming of Chriſt bring to all his poor ſuffering Saints, the fore-thoughts of which ſhould ſupport us under all our preſent Troubles? Although, it may be, now we are deſtitute of all Creature-comforts, our Fleſh and Fleſhly Relations fail us, our Outward-man periſheth daily, our Bodily ſtrength decays, our Friends fail us, our own Hearts fail us, this ſhould comfort us, that our Lord is gone to Heaven, to prepare a place for us, and he is now preparing us for that place, by his Spirit, by his Word and Rod; and when he hath prepared us, he will come again, and take us to himſelf, that *where he is, we may be alſo*; And where is that, but at his Father's right hand, in Glory? *Col.* 3. 3, 4.

2. The ſecond Preparative to this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, is, that great and glorious Work of Chriſt, in raiſing our Bodies from the Duſt, and uniting them again to our Souls; the wonderful Effect of Almighty Power and Love. Read 1 *Cor.* 15. 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 15. Death *ſhall* not diſſolve the Union between Chriſt and us; not turn away his Affections from us; but in the morning of Eternity he *will ſend* his Angels, yea, *come himſelf*, and roll away the Stone, and unſeal our Graves, and awake us out of our long ſleep, and call us forth, to receive our own Souls again; and, oh what a joyful Meeting will that be? and, what unſpeakable comfort will that produce?

The Devil had the power of Death till he was overcome by Death, *Heb.* 2. 14, 15. but he that liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, hath now the Keys of Death and Hell, *Rev.* 1. 18. The Saints Reſurrection to Glory is only the fruit of

of Christ's Death, and this fruit they shall certainly partake of. The Promise is sure, *Joh.* 5. 28. *All that are in the graves shall hear* his *voice and come forth.* *Joh.* 6. 39. *And this is the Father's will which hath sent* Christ, *that of all which* he *hath given* him, he *should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.* So Ver. 40. *Joh.* 14. 19. As sure as Christ is risen, we shall rise also; because he lives, we shall live also: Besides this mortal life we now live, we have a life that's hid with Christ in *God, And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory,* *Col.* 3. 3, 4. Oh then, beloved Fellow-christians, *Let us be stedfast, unmovable, alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* Let us never look at the Grave, but let us look to the Resurrection beyond it. Let us contentedly commit these Carcasses to the Dust, that dark Prison shall not long contain them: Let us lye down in Peace, and take our Rest, it will not be an everlasting Night, nor endless Sleep; no, no, there will come a most joyful and glorious Morning. What if we go out of the Stirs and Troubles of this World, and enter into those Chambers of Dust, and the Doors be shut upon us, and we hide our selves, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast; as sure as we awake in the morning, after we have slept out the night, so sure shall we then awake. And what if in the Grave we become loathsome Dust, cast out of the sight of Men, as not fit to be endured among the Living? What if our Bones be digged up, and scattered about the Pits brink, and Worms consume our Flesh, yet *we know our Redeemer liveth,* and we shall see him with these Eyes: And why should we be loth to lay down these Bodies of Flesh, how comely or fair soever they

they are, they have been but the Priſons of our Souls, Clogs and Hinderances to our Souls in the Work of *God*, and Way to *Heaven*. What care, labour, grief and ſorrow have they coſt us? How many a weary, painful, tedious Day and Night? Grudge not, O my Soul, that *God* ſhould diſburthen thee of all this, and free thee from thy Fetters, and break open thy Priſon door; remember that when this Earthly Houſe of thy Tabernacle is diſſolved, thou haſt a Building of *God, an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

O my Soul! labour now to have thy part in the firſt Reſurrection; now labour to get into Chriſt, and to live in him by Faith and Love; now labour to know, O my Soul! the Power of his Death and Reſurrection, in thy dying to Sin, and living to Righteouſneſs; now act thy Faith on Jeſus, and thy Love to him, and let Jeſus live in thee, and manifeſt his Life in thy mortal Fleſh, and let thy Thoughts and Affections be ſet on things above; let thy Converſation be in Heaven, and let thy Heart be where thy Treaſure is; now live to him that dyed for thee, and roſe again, and then fear not Death, but be confident, that as ſure as Jeſus dyed, and roſe again, ſo ſure ſhall all they that ſleep in Jeſus riſe alſo; and that, altho' thy Body be ſown in Diſhonour, it ſhall be raiſed in Glory, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. This is the Second Preparative.

3. The Third Preparative to this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, is that great Aſſize, and general Judgment, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall ſit upon the Throne of his *Glory*, with all the innumerable Hoſt of glorious Angels about him, and all the Sons and Daughters of Men that ever lived upon Earth ſhall ſtand before him, *Rom.* 2. 16. & 14. 10. to be judged by him, and to receive

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their final Doom, *Rev.* 20. 12, 13. *Matth.* 25, 31. at which time there will be made an exact separation between the Sheep and the Goats, between the precious and the vile, and then the Saints shall be first acquitted and justified, and then with Christ shall judge the World. Those that have truly repented, and sincerely believed in the Lord Jesus; they that have chosen the Lord for their God and Chief Good, and Portion, placing all their Happiness in him, and have unfeignedly accepted of the Lord Jesus for their only Lord and Saviour, and have unfeignedly given themselves wholly up to his Government by his Word and Spirit, and entred cordially into Covenant with him, and became entirely his, these shall sit on his Right hand; these have often judged themselves in Heart-breaking Confessions, and therefore shall not be then judged to Condemnation by the Lord, for *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit:* *Rom.* 8. 1. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? Shall the Law? These are not under the Law, but under Grace, their Surety hath fulfilled and satisfied the Law for them; the Law of the Spirit of Life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the Law of Sin and Death; it is God that justifieth, who shall condemn? The Judge himself hath said, That *he that believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life; he shall not come into condemnation,* *Joh.* 3. 16, 17, 36. but will say to all such, *You have confessed me before men, and I will confess you before my Father and the holy Angels.* This will be the joyful day indeed, the day of our full Redemption, the time of refreshing indeed, the fore-thoughts of this day should support us under all our present Troubles.

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4. The Fourth Preparative is, the Saints solemn Coronation, and receiving into the Kingdom of their Father: Now the Crown of Righteousness, of Life, of Glory, which was promised them from the beginning of the World, and purchased for them, by the most precious Blood of Jesus, and laid up in Heaven for them, shall by the Lord, the Righteous Judge, be given them at that day; they have been faithful unto Death, and therefore shall receive the Crown of Life. The Lord Jesus will then say to all his Saints, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Every word is full of joy and comfort. [COME,] will Christ say, *Approach this exceeding Glory; come as near as you will, for the way to it is open for you; I have made your passage plain by my blood.* Christ will not say then, *Come, take up your Cross, and follow me;* but, *Come now, and receive your Crown.* [COME, YE BLESSED.] *In the world ye were accursed, but now ye are blessed, and shall be blessed for ever.* [OF MY FATHER.] *You are the objects of my Father's love, he loveth you as he loveth me.* [INHERIT.] *You are the heirs of the promises, the heirs of the kingdom, the heirs of salvation.* No less than the Kingdom of Heaven. *You shall reign with me for ever and ever.* [PREPARED.] Eternal Love hath laid the Foundation: He prepares the Kingdom for us, and then prepares us for the Kingdom. [FOR YOU.] For you all poor penitent Believers, called Regenerate Souls; *for all you that received me by Faith, and persevered therein to your death.*

Thus much for the Preparatives to this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

II. Se-

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall ſpeak a little alſo of the Properties of this *Glory*; but, oh how ſhort and ſhallow are my Apprehenſions of this alſo! Lord, enlighten my Underſtanding, and affect, enlarge, and quicken my Heart.

1. This glorious ſtate of Happineſs is called *The Purchaſed Poſſeſſion*, *Eph.* 1. 14. It is the Fruit of the Love and Blood of our dear Redeemer, whom we ſhall in Heaven behold and enjoy. We ſhall have our Redeemer alwaies before our Eyes, and the livelieſt ſenſe and freſheſt Remembrance of that bleeding-dying-love, ſtill upon our Souls. Oh, how will it fill our Souls with perpetual Raviſhments, to think that in the Streams of this Blood we have ſwam through the violence of the World, the ſnares of the Devil, the ſeducements of the Fleſh, the curſe of the Law, the wrath of an offended *God*, the Accuſations of a guilty Conſcience, and the vexing doubts and fears of an unbelieving Heart, and are paſſed through all, and are ſafely arrived at the Boſom of *God*.

O think, and think again, what weight of Woe and Wrath, of Sin and Sorrow, lay upon the Soul and Body of our moſt dear Lord, to purchaſe for us this *exceeding weight of glory*. His Soul was oppreſſed, exceedingly oppreſſed, his Body broken, his Blood ſhed, to purchaſe this *Glory*. We value things by the Price they coſt: If any thing we enjoy were purchaſed by the Life of our deareſt Friend, how would we eſteem it? Certainly the bitter Death and Blood of our Lord will everlaſtingly ſweeten our Heavenly Glory: (Oh, that's the Joy!) we ſhall then leave thoſe Hearts of Stone and Rock behind us; the Sin that here ſo cloſe beſets us, and the ſottiſh Unkindneſs that followed us

us so long, shall not be able to follow us into that *Glory*; but we shall behold, as it were, the wounds of Love, with Eyes and Hearts of Love for ever. Now his Heart is open to us, and ours shut to him; but when his Heart is open, and our hearts open too, oh what a weight of Joy will there then be! What a passionate meeting was there between our new-risen Lord and the first-sinful silly Woman that he appears unto? How did Love struggle for expression? *Mary!* saith Christ: *Master!* saith *Mary*; and presently she clasps about his Feet, having her Heart as near his Heart, as her Hands were to his Feet. What a meeting of Love then will there be, between the new-glorified Saint, and the glorious Redeemer? But I am here at a loss, my Apprehensions fail me, and *fall short*; only this I believe, that it *will* be the singular Praise of our *Glory*, that it was bought with the price of that Blood; and the singular Joy of the Saints to behold the Purchaser and the Price, together with the Possession.

2. *Secondly*, This *Glory* also is most free; it was dear to Christ, but free to us: *Silver* and *Gold* could not purchase this *Glory*, nothing but the precious Blood of the Son of God; but we have it freely, for nothing, without Money, and without Price. It's true, this *Glory* is promised on Conditions, but the Condition is but hearty Acceptance, and to take him for our Lord, who hath redeemed us, especially when the Condition is also given, as it is by *God* to *all his Chosen*. Faith, which is the main Condition, is the gift of *God*. O the everlasting admiration which must needs surprize the Saints, to think of the freeness of their Glory! O what did the Lord see in me, to count me meet for such a state? That I, a poor, diseased, despised Wretch, should be cloathed in the brightness of

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this *Glory!* That I, a silly worthless Worm, should be advanced to this high Dignity! That I, who was but lately groaning, weeping, dying, should now be so full of Joy as my Heart can hold! Yea, should be taken from the Grave, where I was rotting and stinking; and from the Dust and Darkness, where I seemed forgotten, and here set before the Throne of *God* in Glory! when the poor self-denying, self-accusing, humble Soul, that thought himself unworthy the ground he trod on, unworthy the air he breathed in, unworthy to eat, drink, or live; that this Soul shall find himself wrapt up into Heaven, closed in the Arms of Christ, crowned with *Glory*, in a moment! Do but think with your selves what a transporting astonishing thing this will be: surely our Unworthiness shall not hinder our Glory. *God* hath chosen the Poor of this World, rich in Faith, to be Heirs of that Kingdom.

Grace is most free, so is *Glory*: As we pay nothing for our Pardon, so nothing for our Glory. What an astonishing thought will it be, to think of the unmeasurable difference between our Deservings and our Receivings, between the state we should have been in, and the state we are in? to look down upon Hell, and see the vast difference between us and them? to see the Inheritance, which we were born to, so different from that we are adopted to! O, what pangs of Love will it cause within us, to think, yonder in that dreadful place, in those Lakes of Fire and Brimstone, was my native place, my deserved Portion, those unquenchable Flames should have lain on me, that never-dying Worm should have fed on me! But that unsearchable rich Grace, and infinite Love in *God*, through the most precious Blood of my Redeemer, I am delivered from that place of Tor-

Torment. Eternal Life is the *Gift of God*, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord: Did not I neglect Grace, and make light of the Offers of Life, and ſlight my Redeemer's Blood a long time, as well as thoſe poor damned Souls? Did not I waſte my time, forget my *God* and my *Soul*, and walk after the Fleſh, as well as they? Was not I born in Sin and Wrath, as well as they? Or, who made me to differ? Should I ever have loved *God*, if he had not firſt loved me? Or ever been willing, if he had not made me willing? Had not I been in thoſe flames, if I had my own way, and if he had let me alone to my own will? Oh, how free was all this infinite Love, and how free is this Crown of Glory, that ſo glorious a Crown ſhould be ſet on the Head of ſo vile a Creature?

3. The third Property of this *Glory* is, that it ſhall be *fully ſatisfying* and *contenting*, for it is a *weight of Glory*, an *exceeding weight of* [illegible] perfect freedom from *all Evil*, and a perfect fruition of *all Good*: This Glory ſhall be perfectly ſuited to our Natures; for, as here in this Life every gracious Soul is made partaker of the Divine Nature, of the Life of God in ſome meaſure, and made like Chriſt in ſome degree; ſo in the Life to come he ſhall have a Nature more *fully like God*, his holy Image more *fully* printed on him, and made more *fully* like Chriſt: *When he ſhall appear, we ſhall ſee him as he is, and we ſhall be like him*, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. When we awake, at the glorious morning of the Reſurrection, we ſhall be ſatisfied with his likeneſs, *Pſal.* 17. 15. This Glory ſhall be perfectly ſuited alſo to the Deſires of the Saints; then the Soul ſhall have *all* that Heart can wiſh, *all* that ever thou (O poor believing Soul) didſt ever pray or labor for, there thou ſhalt find: thou wouldſt rather have *God* in *Chriſt*, than all the World; why, there

there thou ſhalt have him. O, what wouldſt thou give for the Aſſurance of his Love? Why, there thou ſhalt have Aſſurance beyond all ſuſpicion; yea, thou ſhalt have infinitely more than thou canſt deſire.

This *Glory* is ſuited alſo to *all* the Neceſſities of the Saints; it will make a full ſupply to *all* our wants, for it is an *exceeding weight of Glory*. *My God ſhall ſupply all your need with the riches of his glory in Jeſus Chriſt*, *Phil.* 4. 19. Here in this World we are always complaining of Wants; for Soul or Body, or both, we want *Grace*, want Peace and Comfort; we want Health and Friends; nothing but Wants: But when once we come to poſſeſs this *exceeding weight of Glory*, we ſhall have no more cauſe to complain of Wants; we ſhall never want any thing for ever, for we ſhall be filled with *all the Fulneſs of God*; we ſhall ever be with the Lord, and dwell in his preſence for ever, in whoſe preſence is *fulneſs of Joy*, and *at whoſe right hand are Pleaſures for evermore*. *Solomon* ſaid, That *Money anſwereth all things*; I am ſure that *Glory* will anſwer all things.

4. *Fourthly*, This Glory is *incorruptible*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. This is an Inheritance *incorruptible and undefiled*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. We ſhall then have Joy without any mixture of Sorrow, Reſt without Wearineſs. As there is no mixture of Corruption with our Graces then, ſo no mixture of Sufferings with our Solace. Our beſt Comforts here are mixed with Croſſes; we have no Flower without Prickles. Our beſt Wine is mixed with Water, and ſometimes with Vinegar and Gall. We are now ſometimes even at the gates of Heaven, and preſently almoſt as low as Hell. To day we are well, to morrow ſick; to day in credit, to morrow in diſgrace; to day have Friends, to morrow none.

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The only thing that corrupts and imbitters our ſweeteſt Comforts here, is our Sins, and God's hiding his Face from us, for our Sins. It is Sin that puts Gall and Wormwood into all our pleaſant Cups; but when we ſhall receive that *exceeding weight of Glory*; we ſhall ſin no more for ever. Hark, O my Soul, the beſt News that ever thou heardſt, ſince that greateſt good news of a Saviour; the time is coming, when thou ſhalt ſin no more, *Rev.* 21. 27. then Saints are Saints indeed, *Eph.* 5. 27. O poor Believer, if it were put to thy choice, wouldſt thou not rather chuſe to be freed from Sin, than to be made Heir of all the World? Wait till then, and thou ſhalt have thy deſire. That hard, earthly, carnal Heart, that thou haſt ſo often complain'd of to the Lord; thoſe vain and vile Thoughts, which did lye down and riſe with thee, ſhall trouble thee no more: Oh, bleſſed ſtate, bleſſed time!

4. And *Laſtly*, It is *an eternal weight of glory*; a Crown of Glory *that fadeth not away*; that Life is everlaſting; there is no more Death, it is everlaſting Peace, everlaſting Joy, Pleaſures for evermore, Eternal Glory: O bleſſed Eternity! The Saints ſhall be Pillars in the Temple of God, and go no more out for ever: What! to be eternally bleſſed, to be ever with the Lord? What can my ſhallow Thoughts conceive of this? O happy Souls in Hell, if they could eſcape after millions of years!! But how infinitely happy are thoſe in Heaven, that ſhall live there eternally! O this amazing, this aſtoniſhing word Eternity!

O my Soul, ſtudy this word [*Everlaſting*;] methinks it ſhould revive thee in thy deepeſt Agony: Thy Heavineſs ſhall endure but for a night; God will hide his Face but for a moment; thy

Afflictions are but light and ſhort, thy Temptation ſhall be but an hour, thy Tribulation but ten days, but *thou ſhalt receive a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Believe this, O my Soul, and let thy Heart break and melt, that thou art no more affected with that eternal Love that purchaſed this eternal Glory for thee: For ever adore and admire eternal Love and Grace, and double thy Diligence, to ſecure thy title to this *eternal weight of glory*; and live in the Love, and in the high Praiſes of thy dear Redeemer; and patiently bear all thy Afflictions, becauſe they are preparing thee for this Glory.

Thus we have ſeen a little of the Preparatives to, and Properties of this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; and, alas! how little do I know of it! Now, before I proceed, let us alſo enquire who ſhall be the Poſſeſſors of this Glory, or what thoſe happy perſons are, that ſhall be made partakers of this Bleſſedneſs, that we may know whether we our ſelves have any title to it, and have any good hope, through Grace, that we ſhall one day enjoy it: It will be but ſmall Comfort to hear of all this Bleſſedneſs and Happineſs, if we our ſelves have no right to it. And of this briefly.

Certainly this moſt bleſſed ſtate is not for all, not for moſt, but only for a few: *Few*, ſaith our Lord, *ſhall be ſaved*; and thoſe are the Children of God, only they are Heirs to this Glory, *Rom.* 8. 17. If Children, then Heirs, not elſe; and ſuch we are not by Nature, *Joh.* 8. 44. *Eph.* 2. 2, 3, 12. But all that are the Children of *God*, are made ſo by Grace; they are made ſo by Faith in Chriſt. *Gal.* 3. 26. *We are all the children of God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt*: And if we are Chriſt's by Faith, then are

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we the Heirs of the Promiſe, *ver.* 29. That is, we are Heirs of this promiſed Glory. So *Heb.* 6. 17, 18. Alſo we are made the Children of *God* by Regeneration, by the New-birth. Full is that Text, *John* 1. 12, 13. *As many as received him*, that is Chriſt, *to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, even to as many as believe in his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* So 1 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4. we are ſaid to be begotten to this Inheritance, *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.* So 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. And our Lord, who is Truth it ſelf, hath aſſured us, that *except a man be born again, he can never ſee the kingdom of God*; that is, he ſhall never inherit this *Glory*. It is prepared for none but *God*'s Children, and none are his Children but true Believers in Chriſt; none but ſuch as are truly regenerate, and born again by the Word and Spirit; now all ſuch as are in Chriſt have his Spirit living and ruling in them: *Rom.* 8. 9. *If any man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, the ſame is none of his.* And, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *If any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature; all old things are paſt away, and all things are become new.* And ſuch as are born again, they have the Image of *God* repaired in them, the Divine Nature communicated to them, the Life of *God* planted in them, and are thereby enabled to live unto *God*, and to walk as his Children, in ſincere Obedience to all his Commandments, in reſemblance of their Heavenly Father, in moſt hearty and ſuperlative love to him, and in an holy confidence in him, and entire dependance on him, as their moſt gracious Father Almighty, in and through their moſt dear Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Theſe are the Perſons, and

these only, that shall be advanced to this *exceeding weight of glory*.

Moreover, we are made the Children of God by Covenant; God, the All-sufficient Good, of his infinite Love and Grace, condescends to poor Sinners, and freely bestows himself upon them, becomes their God in Christ, and takes them into Covenant with himself, and makes them his Sons and Daughters, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17, 18. communicating to them his Spirit, working in them all sanctifying Graces, pardoning their Iniquities, giving them new Hearts, new Spirits, soft and tender Hearts, Hearts to tremble at his Word, to mourn for Sin, their own and others, tender of God's Honour, Hearts to love him, Hearts to fear him, &c. and enabling them to give up their whole selves unfeignedly and unreservedly unto the Lord Jesus Christ, taking him for their only Lord and Saviour, and as the only way and means to bring them unto God, and to his glory, submitting themselves to his gracious government in all things, and trusting in him for Life and Salvation. These are the Children of God, which shall certainly inherit this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.

They are the People of God, that shall possess this glory, who are described by a famous Divine, thus: ——— 'They are a part of the Externally called, who being by the Spirit of Christ 'throughly though imperfectly regenerate, are 'hereupon convinced, and sensible of that evil in 'Sin, that misery in themselves, that vanity in the 'Creature, and that necessity, sufficiency, and excellency of Jesus Christ, that they abhor that 'evil, bewail that misery, and turn their Hearts 'from that vanity, and most affectionately acce-

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'pting of Christ for their Saviour and Lord, to 'bring them unto God the Chief Good, and pre-'sent them perfectly just before him, do accordingly 'ly enter into a cordial Covenant with him, and so 'deliver up themselves unto him, and herein per-'severe unto their lives end.

Now all the Children of God, all the People of God, may be assured of this glory; for, *First*, God hath ordained and prepared this glory for his People. This Kingdom is prepared before the *foundation of the World*, *Mat.* 25. God hath predestinated his Children to this glorious Inheritance, *Eph.* 1. 5, 11. *Rom.* 8. 29, 30. 2 *Thess.* 2. 13. God hath prepared for them a City, *Heb.* 11. 16. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. *Matt.* 20. 23. The Saints are *Vessels of Mercy*, before prepared unto glory, *Rom.* 9. 23. And those, in time, he translates out of Satan's Kingdom, into the Kingdom of his dear Son, and by his Spirit of Grace, by his Word of Grace, by his Fatherly Chastisements, by his Mercies, he doth by degrees make meet and fit for this glorious *Inheritance with his Saints in light*, *Col.* 1. 12, 13. And surely, God's Counsel shall stand, and his Decrees be fulfilled: *Therefore blessed are they whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his Inheritance*, Psal. 33. 11, 12.

Secondly, This Glory is *purchased* also, as was said before: It is alone by the Blood of Jesus, that we have entrance into Heaven; therefore do the Saints sing forth his Praises, for that he hath redeemed them out of every Nation by his Blood, and made them Kings and Priests to God, *Rev.* 5. 9, 10. So that either Christ must lose the price of his Blood and Sufferings, and never see the Travel of his Soul, but all his pain and expectations be lost; or else, for certain, there remains for the

Saints this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

Thirdly, This Glory is *promiſed* alſo: God, that cannot lye, hath promiſed Eternal Life, *Tit.* 1. 2. *Luk.* 12. 32. & 22. 19. *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom.* 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. *Matth.* 25. 34. *Jam.* 2. 5. *Rev.* 2. 7, 10, 11, 17. *Heb.* 10. 34. with many other places. So that if the Purpoſe and Decree of God be certain, if the Purchaſe of Chriſt be certain, if the Promiſes of the faithful God be certain, *all* which are moſt ſure and certain, then alſo it is moſt ſure and certain, that the Children of God *ſhall* moſt aſſuredly one day receive this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

And now, O my Soul! how long *ſhall* thy fooliſh Heart deceive thee? how long *wilt* thou ſet thy Affections on things *below*, upon lying dying Vanities? When wilt thou draw off, and mind thy Everlaſting Reſt in good-earneſt, and lay out thy ſelf to the utmoſt, to ſecure thy Title to it? *Lord, be merciful to me, according to thy loving kindneſs: and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out all my Tranſgreſſions.*

Thus have I ſaid a little concerning this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, of the Preparatives to it, of the Properties of it, and of the People that *ſhall certainly* poſſeſs it, to their everlaſting conſolation. And what *ſhall* I ſay now, but that Shame ſhould cover my Face, and Sorrow fill my Heart, for that I am ſo *little*, oh! ſo *little affected* with theſe great things: Oh, what a hard earthly Heart have I! Oh, that *all* thoſe that *ſhall* read or hear what I have written, may have their Hearts more affected with theſe things, and that they

they may be perſwaded and enabled in the ſtrength of *God*, to put forth all their Power, in the uſe of all means, while they have time, to be aſſured on good grounds, that they are the perſons deſigned for this Glory: And, oh that you and I would now examine our Hearts and States about this.

Let us in the preſence of *God* ask our ſelves theſe few ſerious Queſtions: Are we the Children of *God*, they only are Heirs to this Glory? Have we, out of a true ſenſe of our Sin and Miſery, heartily accepted of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for our only Lord and Saviour, really yielded up our whole ſelves to his government? Are we truly regenerated, our Natures changed, *God*'s Image repaired on us, and his Spirit living and ruling in us? Do we hold out the Life of Chriſt in our Life, and are we like *God*? Have we actually entred into Covenant with *God* in *Chriſt*, and choſen him for our only Happineſs and Portion, giving up our ſelves unfeignedly to be the Lord's? Let us deal uprightly with our ſelves, and if our Conſciences can witneſs for us, that it is thus with us, then may we be confident that all our Afflictions ſhall work and prepare us for that Glory.

I proceed now to ſhew how thoſe light and ſhort Afflictions of the People of *God* in this World, are ſingularly uſeful and influential to work them for, and to work for them this *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. And that theſe waies.

Firſt, By diſcovering, imbittering, curing, and removing thoſe things, which undiſcovered, uncured, and uncleanſed, would utterly deprive us of that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. What thoſe things are, you may eaſily judge; they are our Sins, our Corruptions, our Iniquities,

the Evils of our Hearts and Lives, the filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit; theſe not purged away, will moſt certainly exclude from *Glory*; as, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Col.* 3. 5, 6. *Rev.* 21. 27. *No unclean thing ſhall ever enter into the* New Jeruſalem.

Now Afflictions are uſeful to diſcover Sin, to aggravate and imbitter Sin, to cleanſe and cure the Soul, and ſo to prepare it for Glory.

(1.) To diſcover Sin: Afflictions enlighten mens Eyes; One calls Afflictions the *Chriſtian's Eye-bright.* Man is full of *Self-love*, and this Love is blind and blinding; and Man's Heart is deceitful and ignorant, his Mind is dark; Man is born blind, ſpiritually blind; Men ſee not their Sin and Miſery, *Rev.* 3. 17. until God diſcover their Sins to them, which He doth, as by his Word and Spirit, ſo by Afflictions, *Deut.* 8. 2. *Gen.* 42. 22. 1 *Kin.* 17. 18. God doth by his Rod ſhew Men their Iniquities. A very *Pharoah* ſees, and acknowledgeth his Sin in his Affliction: So did the Jews, *Iſa.* 59. 11. And it's uſual for men to cry out on their Sins in their Trouble, *Oh then, my Pride, my Covetouſneſs, my Prophaneneſs, my Frowardneſs*, &c. of which they would not hear before.

(2ly.) Afflictions are very uſeful to aggravate and imbitter Sin: Thoſe Sins that were ſweet in time of Proſperity, and ſeemed ſmall, or nothing but *Mole-hills*, as it were, light and little, prove bitter and grievous, even as heavy as Mountains. Were not *David's* Sins ſo to him? See *Pſal.* 38. 3, 4, 5.

Our Lord Jeſus, in *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. maketh this ſenſe of the bitterneſs of Sin, a fit qualification of Souls to come to him, that in him they may find Reſt, which Reſt is the beginning at leaſt of that

that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

When and where Sin is aggravated, and becomes bitter and burdenſome to a Soul, then and there Chriſt, Grace, and Glory becomes ſweet and amiable. Uſually in Proſperity Sin is ſweet, or at leaſt accounted ſmall: Is it not a little one? Oh, the Excuſes, Shifts, Evaſions, and Pleas that in Proſperity men ſtudy to extenuate and leſſen Sin! They feel but little weight in great Sins; the Sins of Youth, Vain-talking, Jeſting, officious Lying, neglect of Duty, worldly Talk on the Lord's day, *&c.* who feels the ponderous weight of ſuch Sins in time of Proſperity? Now Afflictions ſerve to imbitter ſweet Sins, and to aggravate ſmall ſins. *Job* 13. 26, 27. then he remembers the Sins of his Youth, and looks on them otherwiſe than he did before. In Youth great Sins ſeem ſmall; as Diſobedience to Parents, waſting time, prophaning the Lord's day, Lying, *&c.* but in Afflictions they lye heavy; as we ſee in *Joſeph*'s Brethren, *Gen.* 42. 22.

(3*ly.*) To cure and cleanſe Sin, *Pſal.* 119. 67. *Jerem.* 31. 18. Eminent is the Example of *Manaſſes*, on whom Afflictions wrought a wonderful change, 2 *Chron.* 33. And this comes to paſs, in that Afflictions, when *God* bleſſeth them, they work Repentance: This is one of God's ends in ſending Afflictions upon his People, *his Children, whom he loves dearly, Dan.* 11. 33, 34, 35. It is to make them white and clean, to purge away their Iniquity, *Iſa.* 27. 9.

And thus Afflictions are influential on God's People, to work them for, and to work for them *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; for none are fit for this glory until ſin be imbittered to them, and they purged and cleanſed from their

Sins in the Furnace of Affliction, but all through the vertue of the Blood of Chriſt, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7, 9.

Secondly, Afflictions are uſeful to prepare for *Glory*, by being means of God's Appointment and Bleſſing, to work gracious and happy Changes on men, without which they can never come to glory. All men muſt have mighty, great, and wonderful Changes made upon them, before they can be glorified: Now, to effect theſe gracious Changes, God uſeth various means, as principally his Spirit, his Word, his Rod; and many times he makes his Rod to do that, and to work that great Change on Men, which his Spirit and Word, without the Rod, could not do, becauſe of Mens reſiſtance of the Spirit and Word; but when the Rod comes, they cannot reſiſt that. By the Rod he makes the Proud to ſtoop and become humble, as in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Caſe, &c. The Rod and the Word work Wonders, when God by his Spirit works in them and with them. Afflictions change, even ſuch as were Beaſts, into Men, yea, into Saints: *Jer.* 31. 18. *I was* (ſaith *Ephraim*) *as a Bullock, a Beaſt, before I was chaſtized; but being chaſtized, I ſpake like a man, yea, like a child of God.* Afflictions working effectually, work this Change. *Pſal.* 119. 67. ſo on *Manaſſes*; many a Child of God can witneſs this Truth.

Thirdly, Afflictions both drive and draw God's People nearer to him; they wandered before, they went a whoring from God after other Lovers; but Afflictions bring them home, *Pſal.* 142. 4, 5. As the natural Spirits in the Body retire inward, and get cloſe to the Heart in cold weather, and in any danger outward; ſo the Souls of God's People draw nea-

neareſt to *God* in times of Storms and Tempeſts in the World: *Pſal.* 31. from *ver.* 9, to 16. his Troubles made him take Sanctuary in God, and to truſt in him: *I truſted in the Lord; I ſaid, Thou art my God.*

Fourthly, Afflictions deſtroy that great Impediment that unfits for Glory, and that is Earthly-mindedneſs, inordinate Love of the Creature, *Phil.* 3. 19. Earthly-mindedneſs fits for Deſtruction, and not for Salvation: Afflictions are intended to wean our Hearts from the World, to crucifie our Affections to Earthly things: And this effect they had on our Apoſtle here, and upon the Primitive Chriſtians, as Verſe the laſt; *We look not* (ſay they) *on thoſe things which are ſeen, for they are temporal: All Creature-enjoyments, which Worldlings ſet their Hearts upon, and labour ſo eagerly after, we value them not, we care not much for them, our Hearts are weaned from them, we are crucified to the World, and the World is crucified to us; but we look to thoſe things which are not ſeen; we mind, and think on, and hope, and believe, and joy in thoſe things which are not ſeen; our Hearts are in Heaven, ſet upon the unſeen God, the unſeen Glory there, the unſeen Jeſus.* And whence came they to be wrought into this bleſſed heavenly frame, but much by the Bleſſing of God on their Afflictions, God's Spirit working in and with their Afflictions this deadneſs of Affection to the World, and raiſing up their Hearts towards Heaven? So their Afflictions were uſeful to them, to prepare them for Glory.

Fifthly, By working in us, and exerciſing in us thoſe Graces to which Glory is promiſed: *Rom.* 5. 3, 5. *Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience,*

perience, and Experience Hope: Yea, God's Spirit makes Afflictions useful to work Holiness, *Heb.* 12. 10. to make God's Children partakers of his Holiness, *without which no man shall see God*. So *Jam.* 1. 12. *Happy is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed, he shall receive a crown of glory, which God hath promised to them that love him.* And in hope of this glory God's People rejoyce in their Tribulations.

Sixthly, Afflictions quicken God's People to all diligence and serionsness in the use of all God's means to obtain Glory; they quicken to Self-examination: *I considered my ways*, saith *David*: They make them search their Hearts, and try their ways: Afflictions make them put away their Idols, helping on the work of Reformation, quicken them to Prayer; then they cry unto the Lord, and pour out their Hearts before him, and God loves to hear their Cries; then they wrestle with God in Prayer, and then they are serious in their Reproofs, Admonitions, and Instructions of others; then also they labour to act their Faith and their Love to God and Christ, and to *set their Affections upon things above*, and to look to their Sincerity and Uprightness. Unto all those things we are too backward in time of Prosperity, but in trouble we are awakened and quickened.

Lastly, Afflictions prepare God's People for glory, by working in them strong Desires, fervent Pantings and Breathings after that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. When holy *David* was in a barren Wilderness, where no Waters of Earthly Comforts were to be had, oh! then his Soul, and Flesh, and all did thirst after God. *Psal.*

Psal. 63. 1, 2, 3, 8. then his Soul followed hard after God. So *Psal.* 42. 1, 2, 3, 4. in Prosperity our Souls follow too hard after the Creature, after the lying, dying vanities of this World: Oh, how are we enamoured with these fading Beauties and Braveries! How eagerly do we pursue the Profits and Pleasures of the World! we may with Shame and Sorrow confess it; but when our Heavenly Father strips us of all our pleasant things, plucks our faireft Flowers out of our Hands, and snatches our deareft Comforts out of our Bosoms, oh, then what Breathings and Pantings after God, the light of his Countenance, and the manifestations of his Love! When Earth is gone, then Heaven is welcome; when the Creature is gone, then Christ is sweet.

Before I come to the Application, three Questions shall be resolved.

Q. 1. *How must Afflictions be so born, as that they may thus work?*

2. *How must they be improved to attain this end?*

3. *Who are the People interested in this Priviledge?*

Q. 1. *How must Afflictions be born, that they may work thus, to prepare us for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?* Of all these Questions I have treated on other Texts, which may be seen in my Notes. Yet briefly,

Answ. That our Afflictions may thus work, we must be sure to bear them as Christians; our Carriage and Deportment in them, and under them, must be as becometh Christians, that is, in such a Christian manner as Christ did bear his Sufferings. We must set Christ before us for our Example, to imi-

imitate him; and we muſt ſet the Saints of God before us for our Example alſo, and bear our Afflictions as they bore theirs: And alſo, we muſt bear them according to the Rules of Chriſtianity, ſet down in the Goſpel; and that is, we muſt bear our Afflictions quietly, ſilently, patiently, ſubmiſſively, contentedly, willingly, cheerfully, and conſtantly: So did our Lord Jeſus, and ſo did the Saints; and ſo muſt we, if we will have this great benefit by them, that they may prepare us for Glory?

Q. 2. *How muſt we improve them?*

Anſ. By the conſcientious practice of theſe Duties.

First, Serious Conſideration. In the day of Adverſity conſider; *Eccleſ.* 7. 14. Do we ſuffer? Let us conſider for whom, for what, from whom we ſuffer? Conſider, what our Lord hath ſuffered for us, what our Sins have deſerved, and what our ſpecial Duties are in time of Afflictions: Let us fill up our Thoughts with theſe ſerious conſiderations, and dwell ſome time in the Meditations of them, and let them ſink into our Minds, and it will much help us in the ſpiritual improvement of our Afflictions for our great advantage.

The want of this due conſideration God chargeth on the Jews as a very great Sin, *Jer.* 5. 3. *I have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved*, &c. God expects, that when he ſmites us, we ſhould lay it to Heart, ponder upon it, and conſider it, or elſe know this, that there is a more dreadful ſtroke of hardneſs upon thy Heart, than there is upon thy out-comforts; for then, without this due Conſideration, no Duty is performed, nor

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Benefit received by all our Afflictions.

(1.) In time of Affliction conſider the vanity of the Creature. When God deprives us of our outward Comforts, takes away our deareſt Relations, now conſider what vain things they are, that we promiſe our ſelves ſo much Comfort and Contentment in; how ſoon they wither, one ſtroke from God ſeparates us and them, they are gone. We can talk of the Vanity of the Creature, but it is never ſo well learned, as when God teacheth by our own Experience; other mens Experience is not ſo much to us. *Iſa.* 40. 6, 7. *All fleſh is graſs*; all Creature-enjoyments are withering graſs.

(2.) Conſider the Evil of Sin: Are we in any Affliction, are we in Pain, under any Trouble? Let us now conſider what Sin is, which is the cauſe of all thoſe Miſeries. Theſe are the bitter Fruits of Sin.

(3.) Conſider alſo the End and Deſign of God in our Afflictions. Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me. What Provocation have we given God? What have we done?

(4.) What Errand and Meſſage is this Affliction come upon? Surely God hath ſent it upon ſome Errand; what is his meaning?

(5.) Conſider alſo the merciful and gracious Diſpoſition of God towards his People in Affliction, *Deut.* 8. 5. *Heb.* 12. 6. *Rev.* 3. 19. He is grieved for them, *Iſa.* 63. 9. In all their Afflictions he is afflicted, he doth not afflict willingly, he loves them when he corrects them.

(6.) Conſider God's fatherly Affection to his Children in Affliction; *Lam.* 3. 33. *Judg.* 10. 16. *Jer.* 31. 20. *My bowels are turned for him.* *Heb.* 4. 15. *Zech.* 2. 8. they that touch them, touch the apple of his Eye. *Pſal.* 103. 13. *God pitieth them*

as

as a Father doth his Children: Therefore let us pray as the Church. *Iſa.* 26. 8. *In the way of thy judgments have we waited for thee.* So *Iſa.* 63. 15.

(7.) Conſider God's gracious moderation of his Peoples Afflictions. *Iſa.* 27. 7, 8. He afflicts in meaſure, *He ſtayeth his rough wind in the day of the eaſt wind*: He doth not puniſh as we deſerve, *Job* 34. 23. *Pſal.* 103. 10. *Job* 11. 6. (2.) He will keep us from ſinking, *Lam.* 3. 22. 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9, 10. Though *troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed; perplexed, yet not in deſpair; perſecuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroyed.* 2 *Cor.* 6. 9. ſee his gracious Promiſe. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Job 23. 6. *Will he plead againſt me with his great power? No: but he would put ſtrength in me.* Pſal. 37. 24. *The Lord upholdeth with his hand.* (3.) He will not be always wrath: Iſa. 57. 16. *It ſhall be for a moment, and no more.* Lam. 3. 31. *He will not caſt off for ever.* 2 Cor. 1. 10. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and will deliver. Pſal. 126. 5. *They that ſow in tears, ſhall reap in joy.* (4.) He orders all the Circumſtances of our Troubles; the Time how long; the Place where; the Quality, what kind; the Meaſure, how much. All the Powers of Men and Devils are not able to add a dram to the weight, nor a drop to the meaſure, of what our gracious Father hath appointed for us.

All theſe ſeven Conſiderations will exceedingly help us to make a profitable improvement of our Afflictions, for the preparing of us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And alſo theſe Conſiderations will very much help us to carry and behave our ſelves aright, and as Chriſtians

ſtians under afflictive Providences, which is the right way to attain the benefit of them.

It is an hard thing for a man to carry himſelf well under a ſmiling Providence; but an harder thing for a man to carry himſelf well under a ſmiting Providence; which was hinted before.

Secondly, But a little more to ſhew how we ought to carry our ſelves under Afflictions, that ſo we may receive the Bleſſings and Benefits of them, which we may loſe by our Miſcarriages.

1. When any *Affliction* befals you, *Be ſilent before the Lord, for he hath put you to ſilence.* Do not murmur, quarrel, fret, or be diſcontented: I believe, a better ſign of an honeſt and upright Heart can ſcarcely be found, than for a man to love God the more for his afflicting of him, and to cleave the faſter to God, when God cuts off his earthly Comforts from him: *Ob, be ſilent before the Lord*; *Zech.* 2. 13. *Lam.* 3. 28.

2. Be humble under God's hand, for that is his end in *afflicting*, lye down at his Feet, *Jam.* 4. God is humbling of you, now then humble your own Souls; labour to break your own Hearts in the ſenſe of your Sins, and to lye low before the Lord.

3. Acknowledge God's Righteouſneſs, and juſtifie him, even when he ſtriketh the heavieſt ſtroke; let the blow be never ſo great upon your moſt deſirable Mercies, yet acquit God, do not charge him fooliſhly, and ſay he dealeth hardly. *Pſal.* 51. 4. God muſt be acquitted and juſtified, tho' he ſhould condemn us unto everlaſting wrath, *Lev.* 26. 41. This is to accept of the puniſhment of our Iniquities.

4. *Search*

4. *Search your hearts, and try your ways. Lam.* 3. 40. find out the *Achans*, the *Jonahs*, the *Dalilah*. *Jer.* 8. 6. when the Lord sends any *Affliction* upon his People, he hearkens to hear what they speak: *The Lord hearkened and heard, and there was none that smote upon his thigh, saying, What have I done?* Our Work now in *Affliction* is to enquire, What Sins have I committed? what Duties have I omitted? Now make a diligent search.

5. Pour out your Hearts to God in Prayer; this is our great relief and ease in time of *Affliction*: *Jam.* 5. 13. *Is any afflicted? let him pray*: Now pray earnestly, fervently, cry to God: Let us never think to heal the wound that the stroke of God hath made any other way: go not to merry Company, and the Affairs and Delights of the World for a Cure: Pray for a Blessing on the Rod: Pray that God will shew you his End in afflicting you, and that he will make up what he hath removed from you by the enjoyment of himself: Pray for Suffering Graces, for *Faith and Patience*: It is a sad thing when *Afflictions* are on Men, if they know not how to ease themselves by Prayer.

6. If by *Affliction* the Lord discover any particular Evil to thy Soul, then break off that Wickedness by speedy Repentance and Reformation, or else you frustrate the very End of God in *afflicting* you, and you provoke the Lord to go on with stroke upon stroke, until you are consumed. If the Lord smite any of you for any particular Sin you live in, and he convince your Conscience of it, do not continue in the practice of that Sin for a World; for when once the Lord taketh up his Rod, he will never lay it down; if he have Love to thy Soul, he will smite thee deeper and deeper, until

until he have ſtript thee of all thy deareſt Enjoyments, and leave thee ſtark naked, that he may ſeparate thee and thy Sin. But when the Lord intends to puniſh a Soul eternally in Hell, he will not do ſo; but whom he loves, and intends to ſave eternally, he will ſmite and ſmite, and never leave ſmiting, until he ſeparate them and their Luſts.

7. Laſtly, give up your whole Hearts entirely to God in Chriſt; for this end God cuts off our choiceſt earthly Mercies, that we may entirely give up our ſelves to Chriſt. Theſe things ſtood in the way of Jeſus Chriſt, therefore God removes them, and ſo makes room in the Heart for himſelf, and for Chriſt.

O, now ſay, O my Soul! thou haſt waſted too much of thine Affections on thoſe poor periſhing things; this Mercy, and that Enjoyment, hath taken off thy Heart from Jeſus Chriſt; this Relation hath lain between thy Heart and Chriſt: Well, now the Lord hath taken theſe away, oh! now my Soul, let Jeſus Chriſt ſtand in the Breach that is made, and let him fill it up: Let him come in the room of that Mercy that is gone. If we labour thus to make up the Breach, the ſtroke will be a ſtroke of Love, and by this we may know that *Affliction* comes in love to our Souls, when it makes us love God better, and ſtick faſter to God than before, and cleave more to Duty than before: That which endeth in our Love to God, did come from God's Love to us. Theſe are the ſtrokes from a Father's Hand, and he will heal them in his due time, which is the beſt time. So much of the *Second*.

Thirdly, If we would improve our *Afflictions* ſo, as that they may be means of preparing us for that

that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, we must carefully avoid the usual Extreams that men are liable to in times of Affliction, that is, neither to slight them, nor to sink under them: *Prov.* 3. 11. *Despise not thou the chastnings of the Lord, neither faint when thou art corrected of him.*

(1.) Slight not *Afflictions*, but value them, for *Afflictions* are of God's sending, they arise not out of the Dust, they are God's Messengers; yea, sufferings for Christ are God's gifts. *Phil.* 1. 29. (2.) They are Love-tokens sent us from a loving Father: *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom he loveth he correcteth.* (3.) They are wholsom Physick, needful for us, to cure the mortal Diseases of our Souls, sent us from a most wise and faithful Physician, who prescribes and orders every Ingredient in our Potion. (4.) They are Marks of the true way to Heaven. *Act.* 14. 22. (5.) Preservatives against the Venom of Sin, to prevent the infection of it. (6.) They are *Covenant-Mercies*. *Psal.* 89. 32. (7.) Means to prepare us for glory, and to prevent our eternal condemnation. 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. Oh, could we but thus receive our *Afflictions*, and so take and bear them, and so improve them after this manner, what singular good would they do us, and what Comfort might we have in them?

And as we must not despise them, so we must not faint under them neither, but patiently and quietly submit to the holy will of God, and resign up our selves to his Good-will and Pleasure; as was shewed before.

Fourthly, We improve *Afflictions* when we are exercised by them, *Heb.* 12. 10. then we shall reap the Fruit of them. Now this Exercise consists (as a worthy Divine observes) in these things;

Fer.

Jer. 9. 24. *Ezek.* 22. 29. *Isa.* 64. 5. to wit, 1*st*, About the *Affliction* that smarts; 2*dly*, About our Hearts that feel; 3*dly*, About the Hand that smites.

1*st*, About the Affliction it self, the Rod that is upon us; we must be exercised in *bearing* Work, in *bearing* Work, and in *doing* work: 1. In *bearing* Work; *Mic.* 6. 9. *Hear ye the rod, and him that hath appointed it*: The voice of the Rod is the whole Word of God: *Three words* (saith he) *especially the Rod speaks*; 1. *Thou hast sinned*; 2. *God is displeased*; 3. *Return and Repent*: We must hear and obey these Voices.

2*dly*, In *bearing* Work; *Mic.* 7. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord.* Jam. 1. 4. Lam. 3. 27. *Bear thy affliction feelingly, freely, willingly*: Jerem. 10. 24. *waitingly, not growing weary.*

3*dly*, In *doing* Work, three things are to be done, 1. Kiss the Rod in your Father's Hand, honour it as your Father's Scepter, fear it as his Sword, love it as his Physick. 2. Cast away the Sin that hath provoked it. *Isa.* 30. 22. *Hos.* 14. 8. *Job* 34. 31. 3. Embrace the Covenant of God, for which he pleads. Thus must we be exercised about our *Affliction.*

Secondly, We must be exercised about our Hearts thus:

1. Heart-Consideration of the Rod: *Eccles.* 7. 14. *Weigh well what it is we suffer*, whence it comes, by what provoked, and to what intended; of which before.

2. Heart-breaking under it: *Jer.* 4. 3. *Hos.* 10. 12.

3. Heart-bending: Our Spirits must stoop to the Will of God.

Third-

Thirdly, We must be exercised about the Hand that smites. *Isa.* 24. 15. to glorifie God in the Fires; 1*st*, By abasing our selves: *Job* 42. 5, 6. *I abhor my self in dust and ashes*, said holy *Job*. 2*ly*, By justifying God in all his Dealings: *Jer.* 12. 1. *Lam.* 3. 39. *Righteous art thou, O Lord.* 3*ly*, By yielding Reverence, Fear, Obedience, Faith. 4*ly*, Going to God for the Blessing of the Rod: And thus exercising our selves these ways, we shall improve our *Afflictions* for our spiritual Advantage.

Q. 3. *But who are the People interested in this great Priviledge, that those short and light Afflictions shall work for them, and work them for, this far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?*

Answ. Surely not all that are *afflicted*; all shall not receive this Blessing, for some grow worse by *Affliction*; but only the Saints and true Believers, such only as are the Children of God, and such as hold forth the Life of Christ in their mortal Flesh; as Vers. 10, 11. of this 2 *Cor.* 4. such as walk as Christ walked, that follow his Steps; such as look, aim at, and follow after invisible eternal things principally and chiefly, as Verse 18; even such, and such only as are exercised by Affliction, as was shewed before; they, and they only, shall reap the quiet and peaceable Fruits of Righteousness here, and receive that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* hereafter. They that bear Afflictions as Christians, and improve them as Christians, and partake of the Blessings of them, they shall partake of this Priviledge of being prepared by them for this *weight of glory*.

The

The Application.

First, for Information,

1 *Inf.* 1. Then God's Children must take heed that they do neither despise the Chastnings of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuked of him: *Prov.* 3. 11. Seeing they are designed for such good ends, as to fit us for glory, we should not slight the least Affliction, the least Cross or Disappointment that doth befal us; for how little soever it be, it is our Father's Rod, his Messenger, his Hand. Nor should we faint under any Affliction, how great and heavy soever it be, because he that lays it on, doth it in love to our Souls, and will lay on no more than he will enable us to bear, for he will uphold us with his Hand.

1. We must not despise them, as noted before, to which I shall add this. We are said to despise a Messenger sent us, when we do not bid him welcome, nor comply with his Message, but turn him off without his Errands end. We must not deal so with any Affliction, any of God's Messengers; we must not be unwilling of Affliction, nor be discontented at them, but thankfully receive them as Tokens of our Father's Love to us, and as his wholesome Physick, which our Souls *stand* in need of; as was also before noted, and to which I shall add a little more, because it is an hard thing to bid Affliction welcome, and to bless God for taking, as well as for giving, as *Job* did.

And though we have no warrant to pray for Affliction (although we may pray that God would use all means to do our Souls good, and to prepare us for glory) yet they *must* be thankfully received, when *God* sends them, and *God* is to be praised for them.

them. This is a hard Leſſon to Fleſh and Blood, who can bear it? Yet it is our expreſs Duty, *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; which I think mainly reſpects the Sufferings of the Saints for Chriſt, in which we are bound to rejoice and be glad. *Matth.* 5. 12. yet not excluding other *Afflictions*: So 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. *Rom.* 6. 2, 3. glory in Tribulations. *Job* 1. laſt.

Obj. *But is it poſſible, that when Afflictions come on us, as loſs of our dear Relations, loſs of our Eſtate and Liberty, loſs of Health, when grievous Pains are on our Bodies, is it poſſible we can bid theſe welcome, and rejoice in them? Or, if it be poſſible, is it neceſſary?*

Anſ. 1. *God* himſelf grants, that the *Afflictions* of his People are not for the preſent joyous, but grievous, *Heb.* 12. 11. not to be delighted in: *God* allows his poor People to complain, and grieve under them; which notes his Tenderneſs towards them: He himſelf takes notice of their *Afflictions*, *Exod.* 2. 25. *Jer.* 31. 18. *Pſal.* 56. 8. he telleth their Wandrings, and puts their Tears into his Bottle. He himſelf is grieved for their *Afflictions*, *Judg.* 10. 16. his bowels work towards them, and *in all their afflictions he is afflicted*, *Iſa.* 63. 9. Now if our *Afflictions* be grievous to *God*, it will not diſpleaſe him if they be grievous to us. Nay, *God* expects that we ſhould grieve for grieving him by our Sins. We never find in Scripture *God*'s People to be blamed for their grieving and complaining of their *Afflictions*, unleſs they were immoderate: *God* doth not forbid the workings of Nature; nay, *God* loves to ſee Nature work orderly and regularly. *Aaron*'s Caſe, and *Ezekiel*'s were extraordinary, and not to be drawn into Example.

Chaſtenin

Chastening is a displeased Father's Rod, therefore there must be a Child-like grief, shame, and sorrow. *Numb.* 12. 14. it is the Rod of Love: There must be *Grief* and *Love* in us his Children; He rebukes and loves, we must grieve and love. So that

It must be granted, that in the pain, and smart, and trouble that is on us, simply considered, we cannot rejoice, nor bid the Burthen welcome: A Man should have an Heart worse than of a Beast to do so: Nor is it required, but the contrary is required, namely, to humble our selves under the mighty Hand of *God*; and to be sensible of his strokes, to be *afflicted*, and *weep and mourn*, *Jam.* 4. 8.

2. But the sweet Fruit, the Blessing of *Affliction*, that *God* intends *Affliction* shall bring forth in us, which we must pray for, hope for, believe for, and to which we must have an Eye as soon as the *Affliction* comes; this is that we must rejoyce in, and bless God for, and so, in prospect of this good Fruit, of this Blessing, and in hope of it, we must entertain our *Afflictions* thankfully, as thus: *I am afflicted in my Relations, in my Estate, in my Body; here are grievous, painful, sad strokes; but, Lord, I hope all this is in love to my Soul, I hope the Fruit will be good, and therefore in hope of the good Fruit, I praise and bless thy Name, and most earnestly beg the Blessing of all thy Chastisements.* So that, if we duly consider, and firmly believe, that our *Afflictions* are Testimonies of *God*'s Fatherly Love to us, and care for us; as *Heb.* 11. *Rev.* 3. 19. *Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten*, saith our Lord; it being a dreadful token of *God's Wrath* not to be afflicted: *Hos.* 3. 14, 17. *Let them alone*, saith God, *I will not punish them*: *Luk.* 6. 22. And if we could firmly believe, that

them. This is a hard Lesson to Flesh and Blood, who can bear it? Yet it is our expres Duty, *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; which I think mainly respects the Sufferings of the Saints for Christ, in which we are bound to rejoice and be glad, *Matth.* 5. 12. yet not excluding other *Afflictions*: So 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. *Rom.* 6. 2, 3. glory in Tribulations. *Job* 1. last.

Obj. *But is it possible, that when Afflictions come on us, as loss of our dear Relations, loss of our Estate and Liberty, loss of Health, when grievous Pains are on our Bodies, is it possible we can bid these welcome, and rejoice in them? Or, if it be possible, is it necessary?*

Ans. 1. *God* himself grants, that the *Afflictions* of his People are not for the present joyous, but grievous, *Heb.* 12. 11. not to be delighted in: *God* allows his poor People to complain, and grieve under them; which notes his Tenderness towards them: He himself takes notice of their *Afflictions*, *Exod.* 2. 25. *Jer.* 31. 18. *Psal.* 56. 8. he telleth their Wandrings, and puts their Tears into his Bottle. He himself is grieved for their *Afflictions*, *Judg.* 10. 16. his bowels work towards them, and *in all their afflictions he is afflicted*, *Isa.* 63. 9. Now, if our *Afflictions* be grievous to *God*, it will not displease him if they be grievous to us. Nay, *God* expects that we should grieve for grieving him by our Sins. We never find in Scripture *God*'s People to be blamed for their grieving and complaining of their *Afflictions*, unless they were immoderate: *God* doth not forbid the workings of Nature; nay, *God* loves to see Nature work orderly and regularly. *Aaron*'s Case, and *Ezekiel*'s was extraordinary, and not to be drawn into Example.

Chastening

Chaſtening is a diſpleaſed Father's Rod, therefore there muſt be a Child-like grief, ſhame, and ſorrow. *Numb.* 12. 14. it is the Rod of Love: There muſt be *Grief* and *Love* in us his Children; He rebukes and loves, we muſt grieve and love. So that

It muſt be granted, that in the pain, and ſmart, and trouble that is on us, ſimply conſidered, we cannot rejoice, nor bid the Burthen welcome: A Man ſhould have an Heart worſe than of a Beaſt to do ſo; Nor is it required, but the contrary is required, namely, to humble our ſelves under the mighty Hand of *God*; and to be ſenſible of his ſtrokes, to be *afflicted*, and *weep and mourn*, *Jam.* 4. 8.

2. But the ſweet Fruit, the Bleſſing of *Affliction*, that *God* intends *Affliction* ſhall bring forth in us, which we muſt pray for, hope for, believe for, and to which we muſt have an Eye as ſoon as the *Affliction* comes; this is that we muſt rejoyce in, and bleſs God for, and ſo, in proſpect of this good Fruit, of this Bleſſing, and in hope of it, we muſt entertain our *Afflictions* thankfully, as thus: *I am afflicted in my Relations, in my Eſtate, in my Body; here are grievous, painful, ſad ſtrokes; but, Lord, I hope all this is in love to my Soul, I hope the Fruit will be good, and therefore in hope of the good Fruit, I praiſe and bleſs thy Name, and moſt earneſtly beg the Bleſſing of all thy Chaſtiſements.* So that, if we duly conſider, and firmly believe, that our *Afflictions* are Teſtimonies of *God*'s Fatherly Love to us, and care for us; as *Heb.* 11. *Rev.* 3. 19. *Whom I love, I rebuke and chaſten*, ſaith our Lord; it being a dreadful token of *God's Wrath* not to be afflicted: *Hoſ.* 3. 14, 17. *Let them alone*, ſaith God, *I will not puniſh them*: *Luk.* 6. 22. And if we could firmly believe, that

Afflictions are the signs of our Sonship, and the signs of the true way to Heaven, that they are for our profit, to make us conformable to Christ, and to prevent our eternal condemnation, and that we have need of them, and that they shall prepare us for eternal glory: I say, these things firmly believed, and duly considered, we shall be able thankfully to receive our Afflictions, and to bless the Lord, in hope to receive those singular Blessings from them, *Rejoycing in Hope, patient in Tribulation, Rom.* 12. 12. It is our want of Faith in *God*'s Promises, concerning those sweet Fruits of Affliction, that we do not cheerfully bear them: *Lord, encrease our Faith, our Hope, our Patience.*

There is *Joy and Peace in believing*; *Rom.* 15. 13. Had we more Faith, we should have more joy and less grief in our Afflictions. We are glad when our Physick works, though it put us to pain, in hope of Relief and Benefit by it; let us do so when *God*'s Physick works, and we shall be sure to have Benefit by all.

Obj. *But are not Afflictions Tokens of God's Displeasure? and, can we, or ought we to rejoice in them then?*

Ans. They are so indeed against the Wicked, and so are all the Mercies they enjoy: And they are Tokens of *God*'s Displeasure against the Sins of his People, but Tokens of Love to their Souls. *Psal.* 99. 8. *Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions. Isa.* 57. 17, 18. and so are Mercies too, *Isa.* 38. 17.

Q. *Can we rejoyce when God takes away our choicest Earthly Comforts, our dearest Enjoyments from us?*

Ans.

Anſ. Yes, after we have been ſenſible of *God's* Hand, and have been humbled under it; and if it make way for better Mercies, and *God* be pleaſed to beſtow more of himſelf, more of his Spirit, more of his Grace, and Love upon us, then we ſhall have cauſe to rejoyce, and to be thankful. So much of the firſt part of our Duty in our Afflictions, That we muſt not *deſpiſe* them.

II. The ſecond is, That we muſt not faint under them, nor grow weary of them. This is the other Extream that we muſt carefully avoid. Seeing Afflictions, which are but light and ſhort, work for us, and work us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, therefore we muſt not grow weary under them.

By this wearineſs, in general, I mean, a ſinking of Spirit, a deſpondency of Heart under the Rod, when a man is, as we ſay, Creſt-faln, and without Spirit, ſo that he cannot bear up, his Spirit fails in the day of Adverſity; when a man is willing to throw off the burthen, before *God* takes it off; as *Job* 4. 5. *Pſal.* 88. 14, 15. *I am afflicted, and ready to dye, from my youth up: while I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off.* Thus ſpake *Heman*, a choice Saint.

Here I ſhall briefly ſhew, 1. the *Cauſe*; 2. the *Cure* of this Wearineſs, that we may the better avoid it.

1. *Firſt*, the *Cauſe*, and that is manifold, *a-firſt*, from Man himſelf; we our ſelves are the Cauſes of this Wearineſs, in a threefold reſpect, as 1. Our not expecting Troubles: In Health we look not de-

for Sickness, and when Troubles come unexpectedly, they make us weary. 2*ly*, Our over-valuing of our earthly Comforts. 3*ly*, Because, in truth, we are more sensible of our Losses, than of our Enjoyments.

2. In regard of the Affliction it self: 1*st*, When it swells to any great height: 2*ly*, When Afflictions are multiplied one upon the back of another. 3*ly*, When they be of long continuance: 4*ly*, When inflicted on the nobler parts, and upon the Spirit: 5*ly*, When but little support, but few Comforters, or miserable Comforters, few to help to bear the burthen: 6*ly*, When they are heavy, and ordinarily they are heavy, because Sin is light, and Glory is light; for when Sin lies heavy on the Soul, and Heaven much in the Heart, Afflictions are much lighter on the Body; *Nil sentit in nervo, cum anima sit in Cœlo.*

3. In regard of *God*; He puts Lead into some mens Burthens sometimes; he sets home Sin and Wrath upon the Conscience, and then men grow weary.

4. In regard of the Devil, he doth his utmost to imbitter every Trouble, and adds his Temptations to make it more intolerable. So much for the *Cause* of Wearinesse.

2. *Secondly*, for the *Cure*. We must labour to avoid this Wearinesse under Affliction; and that we may, take these Directions:

1 *Direct.* 1*st*, Let us urge our Heavenly Father's Command upon our own hearts, and the Command of our Lord Jesus upon our selves: See the express Command of God, *Prov.* 3. 11. *Heb.* 12. 5. *Be not weary of* his *chastisements: faint not when thou art corrected*: Thus speaks our *Heavenly Father* to

his

his Children: And the Command of our Lord Chriſt is expreſs alſo, *John* 14. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled*: Whatever *affliction* befals you, let not your Hearts be troubled. Let us urge theſe Commands upon our ſelves: Conſider we, 1. Is there any cauſe of Heart-trouble, when our Heavenly Father, the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, hath his will, which we daily pray for? All our Troubles are by the Will of God. 2. When the great Proprietor and Owner of all things doth moſt wiſely and moſt righteouſly diſpoſe of his own? 3. When we are called to render back but what we had borrowed? Our Health, Eſtates, Liberty, Relations, Life it ſelf, all were but lent us. 4. When leſſer Mercies are removed, that greater and better may be beſtowed? 5. When we have our Iniquities purged, which is the ſure Evidence that they are pardoned; and that we are made more conformable to Chriſt, and ſo fitted for nearer and fuller Communion with God? 6. When our *Graces* are tryed and acted, and ſo made more apparent and illuſtrious? 7. When by all our *Afflictions* we are prepared for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*? Let us weigh all theſe things well, and they will help us againſt Wearineſs: And for our further help againſt Heart-trouble, ſee my Diſcourſe on *John* 14. 1, 2, 3.

2. That we may not grow weary of *God*'s Chaſtiſements, let us urge Reaſon alſo upon our ſelves, as thus: If I grow weary, I break the expreſs Command of my Heavenly Father, and diſobey the Counſel of my Dear Lord: 2. If I grow weary, it argues my Unbelief; for, who would grow weary of long and grievous *Afflictions*, that did fully believe the gracious ends and

designs of *God* in them; and his sweet Promises to his *afflicted People*; and that *Afflictions* are in the Covenant; that they are the Fruits of *God's* Fatherly Love, and shall surely work for our good; that the Cross is the way to the Crown: Who believes these things, and yet is weary?

Again: By Weariness we make our Burthens heavier than *God* intends them to be; Cheerfulness and Patience makes them lighter: The like *Affliction* to a patient, humble, contented Christian is much lighter than to another fretful, weary, and discontented person.

Now, it is possible we may make our Burthens heavier than *God* intends them, thus: 1*st*, When we think no Trouble like ours: Consider *Job's* Case; Trouble was upon all his Relations, all his Estate, upon his Body, Soul, and All. 2*ly*, When we let loose our Passions, to run whither they will, without any restraint: 3*ly*, When we refuse the Comforts that *God* sends us: So did good *Jacob*, *Gen.* 37. 35. 4*ly*, When we continually fix our Thoughts on our *Afflictions*, and are always poring on them, so that all the Mercies that we enjoy are quite swallowed up: And have we any reason to greaten our own Burthens? And again, by our Weariness we dishonour *God*, and discomfort our selves, and discourage others.

3. *Thirdly*, Serious Consideration, laying to heart and pondering upon several things that may prevent this weariness; as,

1. Consider what this *Weariness* signifieth and implies: it hath very ill significations; for, to be *weary*, signifieth a *want*, or at least, a great weakness of Faith, for he that believeth maketh not haste; want of *Hope*, for we must hope to the end;

end; want of *Patience*, for *Patience* must have her perfect work, which is to last as long as Trouble lasts; want of *Love*, for *Love* endeareth all things; or, at least, a great weakness of those *Graces*.

2. Consider, *God* is long-suffering, He hath waited long on us.

3. It hath been the Practice of all the Saints, in all Ages, to wait on *God*.

4. That by our weariness we limit the Holy One of *Israel*, and do indeed call in question all the glorious Attributes of *God*, his Power, Wisdom, Faithfulness: Let us consider these things.

5. Consider, that they that suffer without weariness, they are blessed and happy; *Job* 5. 17. *Psal.* 94. 12. *Jam.* 1. 12. *Blessed are they that endure*; that is, that suffer without weariness.

6. Consider, that *Afflictions* are signs of our Sonship; *Heb.* 12. and signs of God's Fatherly Love.

7. Consider God's good and gracious Ends; *Isa.* 27. 9.

8. Consider Christ's dreadful Sufferings for us.

9. Consider the many exceeding great and precious Promises that God hath made to patient Sufferers, that he will be with them, will sustain them, and in due time will deliver them: Now, if we will think and meditate on those things, and let our Thoughts dwell on them, and suffer them to sink down into our Hearts, and roul and revolve them in our Minds, they will much support us, and help us against weariness.

4. A *Fourth* thing we must do, to prevent, or cure this Weariness under *Affliction*, is serious examination of our selves, whether we belong to God or no; whether reconciled, regenerated and

born of God, or no; whether united to Christ, justified and pardoned, or no: If you are, why then should we be weary of *Affliction*? For, if *God* have done so many great things for us, surely he loves us, and will afflict us no more, nor no longer than need: Such a Soul will say, *If the Lord please to become my God in Covenant, to give me to Christ, and Christ to me; to pardon my Sins, and take me into his favour, and save me at last, let him do with my Health, and Estate, and Liberty, and Relations, and all, as he pleaseth.* But if on the contrary, upon examination, we find our selves not regenerated and pardoned, it is high time for us to set about these great works in earnest, left we should be cut off before they be wrought in us, and to set in with God in his *Afflictions* on us, for his Rods are one way he takes to bring about these gracious works upon us: therefore we should not be weary of them. O labour for the sense of God's Pardoning, Regenerating, Redeeming Love; and labour to clear up to your selves, your Interest in God by Christ, and this will bear you up.

5. *Fifthly*, Labour to get and keep your Consciences pure and clean, that when there be Troubles without, you may have Peace within: But if God strike you without, and lay on blows on your outward Comforts, your Consciences may not lash you within, and charge you with heavier Burthens. If a man have a sound and whole Back, he can bear an heavy Burthen; but if his back be sore, a small Burthen will pinch him: Let us therefore make even reckoning with God and our own Consciences, by renewing our Repentance, our Faith, in the Blood of Jesus, and by New Obedience; and let us take heed we wrong not, nor wound our Consciences.

6. *Sixth-*

6. *Sixthly*, Spend many Thoughts on *Zion*, be grieved for the *Afflictions* of *Joseph*, think upon the Miseries and Distresses of many of the Lord's dear Servants, and lay them to Heart: Divert and turn aside from musing on your own Troubles only, and let *Sion*'s Sorrows have some impression on your Minds.

7. *Seventhly*, Labour to act Faith strongly upon the Invisible God, and upon that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, prepared in Heaven for you. Moses* endured, and was not weary, as seeing him that is invisible, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. *having an eye to the recompence of reward.*

Act Faith on God's Almighty Power; he can bring light out of darkness, and can make dry Bones live; And upon his infinite wisdom He, who is only-wise and most merciful, orders all the circumstances of your Afflictions, for time, place, quality, and quantity: Act Faith on his Faithfulness, Righteousness, Love, Pity and Compassion; and labour by Faith to realize the promised purchased Glory, which Afflictions prepare you for.

Dilate, spread, and enlarge your Thoughts and Meditations on those Crowns and Kingdoms, that Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, *that fadeth not away*, reserved in Heaven for you; those many Mansions in your Father's House, those everlasting Habitations above; and sweeten your Spirits with those Thoughts.

8. *Lastly*, To prevent or cure *Weariness*, let us be much in Prayer: Seek the Lord, seek his Face continually, seek his Strength: *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he encreaseth strength.*

Strength, *Isa.* 40. 29, 30, 31. *Jam.* 5. 13. *Psal.* 50. 15. *Is any afflicted, let him pray*; call upon God in the day of Trouble.

Q. *But is this all we must do in Affliction? Must we do nothing but pray?*

A. Yes; 1. We must seek the Lord, and *search our hearts, and try our ways*, *Lam.* 3. 40. seeking God, and searching our Hearts, to find out our Sins, must go together.

2. Seek the Lord, and hear the Voice of his Rod; *Mic.* 6. 9. *God* speaks many things by Afflictions; all his Rods have Voices; there is an awakening, a discovering, an humbling Voice, a purging trying Voice, an instructing, teaching, comforting Voice: Let us own *God*'s Hand in all our Afflictions, whoever be the Instruments. *It is the Lord hath taken away my Health, my Estate, my Friends*: So said holy *Job*; not a word of *Instrument*.

3. Seek the Lord, and turn to him with all your Hearts: Turn to him that smiteth: It is in vain to seek God, if we do not turn from our Sins, by true Repentance and thorow Reformation.

4. Seek the Lord, and act Faith on Jesus Christ. *Hos.* 6. 1, 2. *After two days he will revive us.* *Luther* says, *This is the Scripture* Paul *speaks of*, 1 Cor. 15. 4. *Christ rose the third day, according to the Scripture*: What Scripture? *This*, saith he: And then the sence is this. As if the Church should say, Our Afflictions and Miseries may be great, and we may lye in them for a time: So did Christ; he was dead, and buried, and lay in the Grave two days, but he was raised up the third day. And thus should a Child of God exercise his Faith: 'I am

thus

'thus and thus afflicted, and brought very low, 'ſo was Chriſt, and much more; he was a *Man of* 'Sorrows, though he were the beloved *Son of God*: 'He was delivered up into the Hands of Enemies, 'he was ſcorned, ſcourged, crucified, killed, but 'my Condition was never ſo bad; no Sorrows 'were like Chriſt's: Never was the Church of 'God, the Cauſe of God, in ſo low a condition 'as Chriſt was, who is the Head of his Church: 'never was Man or Woman in ſo low a condition as 'Chriſt was; he lay not only under the wrath 'and malice of Men and Devils, but under his 'Father's wrath alſo: He was not only brought to 'Death's Door, but to Death it ſelf; yea, he was 'ſealed up in his Grave, and yet God raiſed him 'up. Here is Food for Faith: In what depths and dangers ſoever the Church of God and People of God may be, let us act Faith on the Reſurrection of Chriſt, he was raiſed up, and ſo ſhall we, if we be his; and therefore let us truſt in the living God, *which raiſeth the dead*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 9.

Thus we ſee what means to uſe, that we may not grow weary of God's Chaſtiſements, nor faint under them.

Q. O, but if I knew God did afflict me in Love, I ſhould not grow weary, but patiently and cheerfully bear my Trouble?

A. 1. If thy Heart be drawn out more after God, to love God more, to fear, to pleaſe, to follow after God more, it is in love: If thou art more fearful of Sinning againſt God, and more careful to glorifie him, it is in love; *Pſal.* 116. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

2. Will

speaks most kindly to her: The blessed Martyrs found it so.

7. Long Afflictions are but Preparatives, sometimes to long-liv'd-Mercies; as in *Joseph* and *David*, *Isa.* 54. 11, 12, 13, 14. If by my long Affliction God make more room in my Heart for himself, Son, and Spirit, his Word; if he crucifie my Affections more to the World, and make me more conformable to Christ, I shall for ever bless his Name for them.

8. The more Afflictions here, the more Glory hereafter; 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. *Matth.* 5. 10. For, 1*st*, the more *Affliction*, the more *Grace* is exercised; and the more *Grace* here, the more *Glory* hereafter: 2*dly*, The more *Afflictions*, the more religious Duties will be performed; *Psal.* 109. 4. *Isa.* 26. 16. *Psal.* 42. 1, 2, 3. Now God will *reward every man according to his works*, though not for them; 1 *Cor.* 15. last, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6.

9. Impatience will but lengthen our Affliction; God's time is the best for deliverance; Affliction shall last no longer than need: *Act.* 27. 13, 15. *Psal.* 23. 1, 2. & 94. 9. *Rom.* 8. 28.

Moreover, that we may bear up as Christians, and not grow weary, and so may find that all our *Afflictions* are blessed to us, to prepare us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, let us dwell on a few more Considerations.

(1.) That these our Troubles are all the Hell we shall have.

(2.) Think much on the real spiritual Advantages we shall have by Affliction: Have we not had some? bless God for them.

(3.) Your choicest and chiefest Treasure is safe; your *God*, your *Christ*, your *Portion*, your *Crown*, your

your *Inheritance* is safe; your *Graces*, your *Souls* are safe.

(4.) Consider it is our unmortified Lust that is the sting of all our Afflictions; its Sin adds gall to our wormwood: Let us set our selves in earnest to the mortifying of our Sins, apply the Blood of Christ, beg his Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 13.

(5.) That all our Afflictions come to us through the Covenant of Grace, *Psal.* 89. 30, &c.

(6.) That they do but reach our worser, our baser part, our Bodies; 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. our Souls may grow better.

(7.) Labour to live by Faith, and keep it as much in exercise as possible; for Faith in exercise 1*st*, shews the extreme vanity of all earthly things; for the Soul by Faith seeth them as God seeth them, to be *all vanity and vexation*, and so it overcometh the World; 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. 2*dly*, Faith presents to the Soul greater, sweeter, better things in *God* and *Christ*, than can possibly be found in the Creature: Faith looks and feeds on Invisibles. 3*dly*, By enabling the Soul to center it self on *God*, and to be satisfied with the naked enjoyment of him; God is *All* to the Soul that trusteth in him; *Job.* 14. 8. *Psal.* 17. 15. *Phil.* 3. 8, 9.

(8.) Labor every day to be more humble, low and little in your own Eyes. Who am I? I am not worthy of the least of God's Mercies; I have forfeited all; I have improved none; it is Pride only that brings Discontent.

(9.) Consider, the worst that God doth to his People here, is but to do them good in the latter end; *Hos.* 2. 14. *Heb.* 12. 10.

(10.) What God wills is best; *God* is Wisdom it self, and he is Goodness it self; when he sends Sickness, Sickness is best.

(11.) That

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(6.) That they do but reach our worſer, our baſer part, our Bodies; 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. our Souls may grow better.

(7.) Labour to live by Faith, and keep it as much in exerciſe as poſſible; for Faith in exerciſe 1*ſt*, ſhews the extreme vanity of all earthly things; for the Soul by Faith ſeeth them as God ſeeth them, to be *all vanity and vexation*, and ſo it overcometh the World; 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. 2*dly*, Faith preſents to the Soul greater, ſweeter, better things in *God* and *Chriſt*, than can poſſibly be found in the Creature: Faith looks and feeds on Inviſibles. 3*dly*, By enabling the Soul to center it ſelf on *God*, and to be ſatisfied with the naked enjoyment of him; God is *All* to the Soul that truſteth in him; *Job.* 14. 8. *Pſal.* 17. 15. *Phil.* 3. 8, 9.

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(9.) Conſider, the worſt that God doth to his People here, is but to do them good in the latter end; *Hoſ.* 2. 14. *Heb.* 12. 10.

(10.) What God wills is beſt; *God* is Wiſdom it ſelf, and he is Goodneſs it ſelf; when he ſends Sickneſs, Sickneſs is beſt.

(11.) That

(11.) That *God* will be with us in all our Afflictions; that his Ends in afflicting us are all good and gracious; that the best way to have our wills, is entirely to submit them to God's Will.

(12.) Think much on the shortness and uncertainty of Life; Life is not *vita*, but *via ad vitam*: Hold out *Faith* and *Patience*, thy Troubles and thy Life will shortly end together.

Let us most seriously and often speak thus to our selves; 'I have great Works to do, great Matters to dispatch, a *God* to be reconciled to, a *Christ* to close with, a Soul to save, a Race to run, a Crown to win, a Pardon to get, an Hell to escape, a Body of Sin to destroy, a World to conquer, a Heaven to secure, and I have but a little short uncertain time for all this; I have one Foot in the Grave, I am just going ashore on Eternity, what time have I to stand poring on my Troubles? Oh! let my whole Soul be taken up with my most necessary Work; oh, let me engage all the powers of my Soul, and Members of my Body, in studying and labouring to secure my eternal Happiness, how to improve all my Afflictions to the good of my Soul, how to glorifie God in those Fires, how to enjoy Communion with God in every condition, how to live so this little short time, that I may dye in Peace, and *enter into my Master's Joy*, to be with my dearest Lord in glory, for ever and ever. Oh! these things should take up our Thoughts, and possess our Minds.

And thus, if we endeavour in the Strength of Christ, so to manage our Afflictions, so to carry our selves under them, and so to improve them as we have been directed, we shall find, by the Blessing of our good God and gracious Father in Christ, that

that all our light Afflictions, *which are but for a moment*, ſhall *work for us* that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*; to which purpoſe, that Chriſtians may be able to bear up under all their Troubles, the Apoſtle ſubjoins a notable and ſingular help, which himſelf and the *Primitive Chriſtians* had found very uſeful by their own experience, which is expreſſed in the following Verſe.

And ſo much for this 17th *Verſe.*

PART

PART III.

Heaven and *Earth* EPITOMIZ'D: OR, INVISIBILITIES THE Greateſt Realities.

2 COR. iv. 18.

While we look not at thoſe things which are ſeen, but at thoſe things which are not ſeen: for thoſe things which are ſeen are temporal, but thoſe things which are not ſeen are eternal.

WE have ſeen in the former Diſcourſe how bravely the *Apoſtle* and *Primitive Chriſtians* bore up under all their cruel Sufferings, and got advantage by them; as *Ver.* 16, 17, and what means they uſed to attain this holy Cou-

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rage; besides all which, here is another singular Help they made use of, to get this gracious frame of Spirit, and that is in these words, Verse 18. *We faint not* (they say) *but gather strength, and get ground inwardly; while we look not at those things which are seen, but at those things which are not seen:* So long as we shut out visible things of our Minds, and shut our Eyes at them, and so long as we apprehend and mind things invisible, and fix our Eyes on unseen things; while we do so, we faint not under all our Sufferings, but profit by them. Here is looking off, and looking on, a double Act of Faith; a looking off *seen things*, things visible to the Eye of Sence, we look off these; and a looking on *things not seen*, but invisible to the Bodily Eye.

Here is a double work, one negative, the other affirmative: For the negative part, observe, 1. the Act, if I may properly so call it, a looking off, or a looking away from, a withdrawing of their sight, 2. An Object, things that are seen, visible things, things obvious to bodily sight. 3. The Reason annexed, for they are are *temporal:* All things that are seen are *temporal*, things that will last but for a time, a short time; they are fading, fleeting things, transitory momentany things: Be they good things or evil things, be they prosperous or adverse, be they sweet or bitter things, if they be seen things, visible things, they are but *temporal*.

2. A positive practice, but we look unto *those things which are not seen.* 1*st*, Here is the Act, *we look*; *Actus Animæ*, it is the Act of the Understanding, Will, and Affections, all are set and fixed on, and employed about. 2*dly*, The Object, *things that are not seen*, things invisible; and the Reason is added, for they *are eternal:* And because these

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unseen things are eternal, therefore are they most worthy of our most serious thoughts and best affections. And both these Acts, of looking off from visible temporal things, and looking on upon invisible eternal things, have a very great influence in supporting Christians under all their Sufferings in this World; as will manifestly appear in the following Discourse.

1. *First*, What is here negatively expressed: We look not at these things which are seen; the meaning is not, that they did shut their Eyes upon all earthly things, and take no notice at all of them, for that was not their Duty: The Apostle himself laboured with his Hands, and exhorteth all Christians to be *diligent in their Callings*, which they could not be, if they did not look upon the things of this World; but he means this, that their hearts, minds, and affections were weaned and taken off from earthly things; they were not earthly minded; *They minded not the things of the flesh, Rom.* 8. 6, that is, mainly and chiefly; yea, not at all in comparison of invisible and eternal things: So our Lord is to be understood, *Joh.* 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which perisheth:* That is, not so much, not so earnestly, as for that which endures to Eternal Life. *Col.* 3. 2. *Set your affections on things above, not on things below:* that is, comparatively; but let the strongest, steddiest stream of your Affections run Heaven-ward: Let your Affections be *set*, that is, placed, setled, fixed *upon things above:* Not that we should not at all mind things below, but we must not set our Hearts upon them, nor fix and place our Loves and Delights in them. So here, we look not on things that are seen, that is, we place not our Affections on them; visible

things

things are not the chief and principal things that we mind; nor do we exercise and spend our most serious and chief thoughts about these visible things, they are not the main study and care of our Souls. *I am* (saith this Apostle) *crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me, Gal.* 6. 14.

There are two kinds of visible things, visible good things, and visible evil things, neither of which was the object of their principal thoughts and cares; and they give a good Reason for it, because they are temporal, they are short-liv'd, and but for the present, and therefore we do not much mind them, nor look after them.

1. Visible good things, simply and in themselves good; as,

(1.) Life, Animal Life, one of the best good things in the World, yet very short, and very uncertain, *Job* 14. 1. *James* 4. 14. What is our life? It is but a Vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away; *Psal.* 39. 4, 5.

(2.) The Accommodations of Life, as, Riches, but *uncertain*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Corruptible*, 1 *Pet.* 1, 17, 18. *Deceitful*, *Matth.* 13. 22.

(3.) Pleasures, *they are but for a season*, *Heb.* 11. all lawful Pleasures, such as *Solomon* had, all but *vanity and vexation*; Health and Strength, Friends and Relations, all are but for a time, a very short uncertain time. *Abraham* had his *Sarah*, and *David* his *Jonathan*, and *Jacob* his *Rachel*, but for a time; daily Experience proves all this, all visible good is but temporal.

2. Evil things that are visible are but temporal also. Heaviness endureth but for a moment; Sickness, Pain, Poverty, Disgrace, Persecution, Afflictions are but *for a moment*, Tribulation ten days, an hour of Temptation, Desertion but a little

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moment; and because this is the Nature and Property of all visible things, that they are transitory temporal things, not lasting, much less everlasting; therefore we that are enlightned by Grace, and that have true understandings and right apprehensions of these things, and which have also had the experience of their shortness and uncertainty, both of the good and evil things of this World, we do not look unto them, that is, we look beyond them and above them; those visible temporal things do not lye so near our Hearts, nor take up so much room in our Minds, nor so much place in our Affections, as invisible eternal things do, nor as those visible temporal things do in the Hearts and Minds of others, whose Hope and Portion is in this Life, and whose Minds the *God* of this World hath blinded. No, no; we look not upon those earthly things with such an Eye of Love, Desire, and Delight; the visible good things of this World do not raise or delight our Souls, nor seek we that content in them that others do; nor have we such dreadful thoughts of the evil things of this World, as to perplex our selves with the fears of them before they come; nor with immoderate sorrow and grief when they come; nor are we so dejected and troubled, when we part with the visible Comforts of this Life, because we have right Apprehensions of them; and therefore we faint not under our Afflictions.

From hence two Points of Doctrine are observable.

1 Doct. *That because all visible things are Temporal, and of so long continuance, therefore gracious Souls engage not their Hearts too much in them, nor concern themselves too much for them or about them.*

2 Doct.

2 Doct. *That a right and true Judgment of earthly things, will help much to support and uphold the Lord's Servants in and under all the afflictions of this Life.*

1 *Doct.* 1. *First*, That because all visible things are temporal, but for a short time, therefore they must not be much minded nor regarded. This is the Character and the Duty of all gracious Souls, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30. Because *the time is short*, therefore *they that have wives must be as if they had none, and they that weep as if they wept not, &c. Job.* 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which perisheth*: And *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful in nothing*, &c.

Q. *But must we cast off all care of earthly things, and not mind them at all?*

Ans. Not so neither; for we are commanded to work, and use lawful Callings, and to abide in our Callings; but the meaning is,

1. That we must not mind and regard visible things, earthly things *Then*, when we are to mind invisible and heavenly things; see *Isa.* 58. 13. upon the holy day of *God*, and when we are in holy Duties, praying, hearing, reading, meditating, then our Hearts, Thoughts, and Minds should be wholly taken up with invisible heavenly things, and visible earthly things laid aside.

2. Nor must we mind them so heartily, seriously, delightfully, as we must mind heavenly things; we must be fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord, *Rom.* 12. 11. and *strive*, as in an Agony, *to enter in at the strait gate*, Luk. 13. 24. and give all diligence to *make your calling and election sure*; and to *serve the*

Lord

Lord with our whole heart, and with all our might; but we are never commanded to mind and pursue the things of the World so, nor with such eagerness and fervency. The Lord chargeth it as a grievous Crime on *Israel*, that they panted after the Duft of the Earth, *Amos* 2. 7. *But gracious souls pant after God*; *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2, 8. *Their souls follow hard after God*: and *blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness*, Matth. 5. Not they that hunger and thirst after the Honours, Pleasures, and Riches of this World. 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *Love not the world, nor the things of the world.*

3. Nor must we mind these visible temporal things firstly, principally, and chiefly, but only secondarily, and in subserviency to heavenly things, *Matth.* 6. 33, 34. *First seek the kingdom of God*; first in the beginning of your Life; first, in the morning of the day; first, in your Affections.

4. Nor mostly: *God* is to be loved *with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength*, Matth. 22. 37. Psal. 16. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me, as the most worthy object of my continual love, desire, fear, and delight.*

5. Nor must we so mind visible things at all, as to be taken off from minding heavenly things, or to be hindred from, or to be unfitted for minding heavenly things.

6. Nor must we mind them, but with heavenly Hearts, and for heavenly ends, still minding God in them, how to glorifie him by them. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Q. *But when do we mind visible temporal things too much?*

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Ans. 1*st*, When we mind them unseasonably, as noted before: 2*dly*, When we mind them inordinately, out of order, that is, firstly and principally: 3*dly*, When we mind them immoderately. *Let your moderation be known unto all men*, saith the Apostle, *Phil.* 4.

Q. *But when do we mind them immoderately?*

Ans. 1. When our minding of these visible temporal things hinders us from minding those invisible and eternal things. This was the Sin of *Demas*, his embracing this World made him forsake *Paul*: So that when the Service of Christ must give place to the Service of the World; when the Farm, the Oxen, the Wife, must be preferred before the Feast, and good Duties laid aside while the World is served; when the call of *God* is neglected, and the call of the World obeyed; then do we mind Earthly things immoderately.

In some cases, I confess, that is in Cases of Necessity, to shew Mercy to any in Misery, to save or preserve Life, God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; but out of those cases *God* and his Service must be preferred before all visible temporal things. But when earthly things so fill up our Heads, Hearts, Minds, Thoughts, Hands, Time and all, that we have none left to spend or bestow on heavenly things, then we mind visible things immoderately.

2. When our minding visible temporal things unfits and indisposeth us for minding invisible and eternal things; when earthly things have so entred our Hearts, and so engaged our Minds, that they deaden and dull, clog and cloy our Spirits,

so entangle and perplex our Thoughts, as that thereby we are put out of frame and temper, and made unfit to mind or meddle with Divine and Heavenly things. *Luke* 21. 34. *Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life,* saith our Lord.

3. When we are less tired and wearied in the thoughts of visible temporal things, than in the thoughts of invisible eternal things: When we can plot, study, cark, care, think, muse, ponder upon, freely talk of earthly things, without weariness, but with much delight, as being very suitable to our Minds, and therefore very pleasing and grateful to us; we can think and speak of earthly things from morning till night, without wearyness, but are soon weary of the study and meditation of heavenly things; nay, are meer Strangers to heavenly Meditation and heavenly Discourse; *Mal.* 1. 13. When we are in company where there is heavenly talk, we are soon weary of such company, and of such talk, and are willing to break off such Discourse, and to entertain the talk of worldly things.

4. When we are more attentive unto, more intent upon, more seriously affected with, and more strongly impressed by those visible temporal things, than we are with and by invisible and eternal things. When good News from Sea or Land, a good Bargain, good success in our Worldly business, doth more heartily affect us and rejoyce us, than good News from Heaven, or any spiritual Mercy, then we do immoderately mind earthly things. It was far otherwise with holy *David*, *Psal.* 4. 6, 7. *Many say, Who will shew us any good?* any visible temporal good; but, *Lord, lift thou up*

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the light of thy countenance upon us: Thou hast put more gladness into my heart, than when their corn and wine encreased. And so it is with all gracious Souls.

5. When the gain of visible temporal things brings more joy, and the loss of them breeds more sorrow than the gain or loss of invisible eternal things; when the gain of an Estate, of Honour, of the Favour of a great person, doth more rejoice the Heart than the gain of the Pearl of Price, and the loss of an Estate or Friend doth more cast down than the loss of God, or a good Conscience.

6. When we are more afraid of Suffering than of Sin, and would rather venture the loss of invisible eternal things, than the loss of visible temporal things: Surely it was not thus with the Apostles and Primitive Christians; they looked not on those visible temporal things, they did not mind them unseasonably, inordinately, immoderately; and so, comparatively, they are said to mind them not at all.

The Proof of this Point will appear, I. by expres Precept; II. by the Practice of Gospel-Christians; III. by solid Reasons.

I. By expres Precepts; besides those mention'd before, *John* 6. 27. 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. *Phil.* 4. 6. that in *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 5. *Set your affections on things above, and not on things below,* and *mortifie your inordinate affections*: 1 *John* 2. 14. *Love not the world, nor the things of the world; for he that loveth the world, the love of the father is not in him.* Let us lay that to Heart, the love of the World is utterly inconsistent with the love of God: Suitable to that in *Jam.* 4. 4. *He that is a friend of the world, is the Enemy of God; the friendship of this world is enmity to God.* It is a dangerous thing to be the Enemy of

God; nothing is so dangerous: See *Nahum* 1. 2. *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth: the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and reserveth wrath for his enemies.* What a dreadful Text is this! And who are the Lord's Enemies? Why, *those that are the friends of the world*, saith the Spirit of God. Although but few think or believe so, yet so it is; and it is a most dreadful thing to be the Enemies of God, for then God is our Enemy, and that is most dreadful. Now, *he that is a friend to the world, is the enemy of God. World* in that place, I take to be the same that is here in my Text, called *Visible temporal things*, the good things of this World: *Such as are the friends of these things*, saith the Apostle, *are the enemies of God*; and this is no small matter: let us all therefore look well to it, that we be not such.

Q. *But who are the friends of this World?* you will ask.

A. First, All such as love this World, and the things of it, more than God, and Christ, and Heavenly things; this is most clear: So *Matth.* 10.37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me*, saith our Lord. 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. *Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*

What do most People mind most, and think most upon, and speak most of? Is it not the World, *things that are seen?* What is most in their Thoughts, Mornings soon, and Evenings late? Where are their Hearts and Affections most? Let our Consciences speak: Whom do we serve most, follow and pursue most, God or the World, Christ or the Creature? Who hath the precedency and fu-

supremacy in our Hearts? What Interest is uppermost in our Souls? This is a plain Rule of Tryal; and if we will suffer our own Consciences to speak plainly, and tell us the truth, we may know whether we be Friends of the World or no. Let us deal faithfully with our selves in this great Case, and not flatter and deceive our selves, as most do, and so mistake our selves, by taking our selves to be the Lord's Servants, when indeed we are his real Enemies, because we are Friends of the World; and by this mistake may we ruine our selves for ever.

Secondly, All such as covet, desire, seek after the World, the Profits, and Pleasures, and Favours of it, more than after God and Christ, after Grace and Glory: Such as pant after the Dust of the Earth, that make haste to be rich, that load themselves with yellow Clay, such are Friends of the World: Whereas gracious Souls are like those in *Isa.* 26. 8. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee: the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.* So *Psal.* 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* So *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O Lord.* The strongest, steddiest Streams of his Desires and Loves did run after *God* and his Favour.

Thirdly, He that is commanded by the World, is a Friend of the World; one Friend can command another; so all Friends profess to one another, and if they mean not so, they basely dissemble. Can the Profits and Pleasures of the World com-

command your Hearts, Thoughts, Affections, Time and Strength, yea, and your Consciences too? Can the World keep you from serving God? Can you dispense with the Service of God to attend the World? then sure you are the Friends of it.

Fourthly, Are you more intimate, friendly, and familiar, more pleasant and joyful in the company of the People of the World? And in your dealings with the things of the World, are you more delighted and pleased, and are, as it were, more in your Element, and where you would be, than when you are in the company of the Saints, and than when you are dealing with *God* and *Christ*, and *heavenly things*? *David*, who delighted greatly in God, and in his Word, and in his Saints, professed himself to be a Stranger in the Earth, as *Psal.* 119. 19. When the Lord's Servants are in his work, and among his People, then they are in their Element, then they are where they would be: *One day in thy House is better than a thousand*, *Psal.* 84.

Fifthly, He that seeks the Worlds Favours, and fears the Worlds Frowns more than *God*'s, is a Friend of the World. A gracious Soul seeks nothing so much as *God*'s Favour: O, how doth *David* pant after God's Favour, and the light of his Countenance! *In thy favour* (saith he) *is life*, Psal. 30. 6. *and thy loving-kindness better than life*, Psal. 63. 3. And how earnestly and frequently doth he pray, that *God* would not hide his Face from him?

Sixthly, He that is troubled more for the loss of those visible temporal things, than for the loss of God, or his Gospel; and complains more for the want and absence of these things, than for the want and absence of God, such, in such a degree, are

are Friends of the World, and being Friends of the World, are Enemies of God.

Seventhly, He that gives the *World* most Respect and best Entertainment: we give our Friends most respect, and best entertainment. How oft hath Christ knock'd at our Doors in the Ministry of the *Word*, and Motions of his *Spirit*, begging our acceptance? How oft hath Christ called to us in Ordinances and Providences for entertainment, and we have shut our Hearts against him? How oft hath the Holy Spirit been striving with us, but we have grieved and quenched him by our Resistance? But how easily have we entertained the Enticements of the *World*? How readily have we embraced the Motions of the *World*? This proves us to be Friends of the *World*; and such are the Enemies of God. By these things let us try our selves, and we may know whether we be the Friends of the *World*, or the Friends of *God*.

II. This Point is proved by *Example*: Take our Apostle as a pregnant Instance; as in the Text, saying, *We look not at those things which are seen*: So in *Gal.* 2. 20. & 6. 14. *I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.* As if he had said, 'I am in the Eye of the *World* as contemptible, despicable, and abominable a thing, as one hanged on the Cross, as a Malefactor on the Gallows, an Object that Passengers are not to look upon, but turn away their sight from: *Such a one am I*, saith this blessed Apostle; for the *world* said of him, Away with such a fellow, he is not worthy to live: *And the world is crucified to me*, saith he. 'I have as low and base thoughts of the *World* as the *World* hath of me; the *World* is as despicable and contemptible to me, as I am to

'it; I look no more upon the *World* than it 'doth upon me; I do as little value the *World* as 'it doth value me.' And this is a full explication of his sence in the Text, *We look not on those things which are seen, for they are temporal.* This is the Character of truly-gracious Souls. So *Gal.* 5. 24. *They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.*

Q. *But how shall we know when we are crucified to the World?*

Ans. 1: When our care for visible temporal things doth not consume and eat out our care for invisible and eternal things; when our care for our Bodies doth not destroy our care for our Souls; *Deut.* 4. 9. *Only take heed, and keep thy soul diligently:* Our Souls must have our greatest care, and all other cares we must cast on God: *Matth.* 6. 33. *First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added.*

2. When the work of the World is neglected, that the work of *God* may be attended. See this in *Martha's* Case, *Luke* 10. 40, 41. one thing is needful.

3. When, altho' our Hands may be full of visible temporal things, yet our Hearts are not entangled nor over-charged with them, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. *Luke* 21. 34. When our Engagements about visible temporal things do not hinder us from minding our concernments about invisible eternal things, 1 *Tim.* 6. 19. When matters and businesses of the World are made to stand by, and give place to the Service of *God*. When praying-times, hearing, reading, meditating times are duly attended and observed. And indeed, we have need work while

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our day lasteth; for there is no work, wisdom, or device in the Graye, whither we are going: All that is to be done for Eternity, must be done in this world, *John* 9. 4.

4. A man is then crucified to the world, and to these visible things, when he is content to be without these good things of the world, when the will of the Lord is so; Content to be without Friends, Health, Liberty, Wealth, Honours, Pleasures, *Phil.* 4. 11, 12. Contentment is the Hearts Ease; well-pleasedness with our condition, without vexation or distraction; to acquiesce in the holy will of God: Godliness and Contentment grow both together; if Contentment be little, Godliness is not much: if thou be truly godly, then *God*, the All-sufficient and Chief Good, is thy Portion; and so thou hast enough to content thee, enough to make thee happy for ever. It is a Paradox to the *World*, That a gracious Soul cannot be content with the whole world only, and yet can be content without it. Let us seek Content where we will out of *God*, and we shall never find it.

5. And lastly, when a man can patiently bear the loss of all visible temporal things, then he is crucified to the world; when Losses and Crosses do not sink him, and make him faint, as those Saints in this Chapter, *ver.* 16. and those in *Heb.* 10. 34. who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. And thus we have the description of a person that is crucified to the *World*, and the *World* to him; one that looks not on the things which are seen, that sets not his Heart and Affections upon them.

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III. The Reasons of the Point, why gracious Souls do not so much regard and mind visible things are those that follow.

Reason 1. One Reason is in the Text, which is, because they are temporal, fading, perishing, transitory, momentany things; *All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field*: All are dying things, and therefore no suitable Objects for never-dying Souls to spend themselves upon. All our Relations, how dear and near soever, our Health, Estate, Liberty, yea, our Life, is but a Vapour, that appears but a little time, and then vanisheth away; therefore not fit for immortal Souls to fix upon.

Reas. 2. Because these visible temporal things, the outward good things of this World are most times great Enemies to our Souls, and have proved very hurtful and prejudicial to them, that have had the greatest confluence of them, but beneficial to very few, *Deut.* 32. 15. Oh, how few have been the better for Prosperity!

Now this damage and hurt to mens Souls, cometh not from those good things themselves, for they are good in themselves, and are God's Blessings; but this hurt comes partly from the Devil, and partly from mens own Corruptions.

1*st*, From the Devil, the god of this World, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. who causeth Mischief to the Souls of Men, by the good things of this world, these ways: 1. He misrepresents the things of this world to Men, the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of it, Liberty, Health, Ease, Money, Estates, the Devil shews them in false glasses, and not as the God of

Truth

Truth in his Word declares them to be; and indeed so they are, and not otherwise; but Satan represents them not as vain, deceitful, vexatious, and uncertain things, but as brave, glorious, satisfying things; and thence men promise themselves so much Content in them. 2. He lays Snares, Baits, and Temptations in all visible temporal things; 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. There is not any visible Comfort, but there is some Snare, some Temptation attending it. 3. He over-values all temporal things to us, making them to be worth all our Affections, Strength, Time, and Pains, but undervalues Heaven, Grace, and Glory; there he saith, why so much ado? time enough hereafter. 4. He greatens present Evils, as Shame, Poverty, Sickness, Losses, *&c.* Oh! these must be avoided by any means, but lessenеth eternal Evils, God's Wrath and Vengeance, and eternal Damnation: Thus the Devil makes these visible temporal things hurtful to men.

2*dly*, This hurt comes to men through their own Lust and Corruptions within them; without which the Devil could not hurt them; if Men had not the Spirit of this *world* within them, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. a worldly Spirit, a vain Mind, a foolish Mind, an earthly Mind, darkned and corrupted, suitable to earthly things, which complieth with, and yieldeth unto Satan's Temptations without them, and then their Hearts are carried out immoderately after these earthly things, else Satan could not hurt them.

Now the great Mischiefs which earthly things do to Mens Souls, through the Subtilty of Satan and Mens own Corruptions, are these:

First, These Earthly things hinder men from coming to Christ, as they did the young man, *Matth.* 19. 22. by darkning their Eyes, blinding

their Minds, that they cannot see that transcendent Beauty and unspeakable Amiableness and Comelinesse that is in Jesus Christ; nor their own absolute necessity of him, and their undone estate without him: by filling their Hearts, Heads, Hands, and Time and all, so that there is no room for Christ, nor time to mind Christ; Profits and Pleasures take up all their time, and carry away their Hearts.

Secondly, They hinder men from following Christ, *Phil.* 2. 21. *All seek their own, not the things of Christ*; at least, they hinder men from following Christ fully, and whersoever he goes, as *Joshua* and *Caleb* did, and those in the *Revelations*, 14. 4.

Thirdly, They hinder men from owning Christ and his Truths and Saints, and from suffering for Christ when called thereunto; as it hath millions of Professors in time of Persecution.

Now, from the consideration of the danger we are in, from visible temporal things, we have good reason to draw off our Hearts and Affections from them, and not much to mind or regard them.

And indeed, our Souls are in danger on both hands, both from the good and from the evil things of this *World*, Prosperity and Adversity.

1. From Prosperity, we are in danger to have our Hearts divided and estranged from *God*, and so to commit spiritual Idolatry, setting up our Enjoyments for Idols in our Hearts, taking more pleasure and delight in them than in God and his Service: We are in danger of forgetting God, and of falling into sinful security; in danger of being lifted up with Pride and Vain-glory, and thereby provoke God; and in danger of growing careless and negligent in the Service of God; And these are great Evils.

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2. From Adversity there is danger also; as in case of loss of Friends, Estate, Liberty, Health, &c. We are in danger of Impatience, Discontent, Despondency, &c. And therefore gracious Souls labour to get off their Hearts as much as they can from all visible temporal things, and to be as indifferent and as unconcern'd to them as possibly, and to be as dead to them as they can.

3 *Reas.* Because of the Vanity, utter Insufficiency, and Impotency of all earthly things, without God, either to preserve from the least Evil, or to procure the least good. All the Riches in the world cannot cure an aking Tooth; *Haman*'s Honour could not save him from the Gallows, nor *Herod* from the Worms: See *Prov.* 11. 4. *Eccl.* 1. 2. & 5. 10. *Isa.* 55. 2. There is no satisfaction to be had in them or from them.

4 *Reas.* Because there is not the least true happiness in having the greatest abundance of earthly things; for if there were, then Reprobates and Cast-aways should have the greatest share in Happiness, for they have most of those things.

5 *Reas.* Because every gracious Soul is in Covenant with God, united to Christ, partaker of his Spirit, and so made like unto God, and like unto Christ: The Great God is his, and all the great things of the Covenant are his; Christ, and all his Benefits are his; and, alas! what mean, low, base things are all the visible temporal things of this World, in comparison of God, of Christ, and Glory? Besides, all gracious Souls are in measure made like God: And we read what a low esteem God hath of these things, *Luke* 16. 15. *Those things*

that

that are highly esteemed amongst men, are an abomination to the Lord. And our Lord Jesus had a very low esteem of them, being contented to be without house or home, or a penny in his Purse: And every true Christian hath the Spirit of Christ in some measure, and the same mind that He had; *Rom.* 8. 9. *Gal.* 4. 6.

6 *Reas.* Because gracious Souls are born of *God*, and that unto far higher and better things than these visible temporal things are at their best, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. They are begotten to *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for them who are kept* (for it) *by the mighty power of God unto salvation.* And they are also bound for God, and for Heaven; they have not their Portion here, nor their Treasure here; they are bound for another Country; they seek a City that hath Foundations, and their Hearts are where their Treasure is: and therefore they do not much mind and regard those visible temporal things.

7 *Reas.* Because they have been so often disappointed and deceived by those things; they never found that in them which they expected from them; the World hath ever proved false to them; they have tryed it, and by Experience have ever found it *Vanity and Vexation*, and nothing else.

8 *Reas.* And Lastly, Because gracious Souls have Principles of Faith in them, they have the same Spirit of Faith in them, that those Primitive Christians had, and that is a *victorious Principle*, a *World-conquering Faith*, Heb. 11. 1.

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By Faith the Soul mounts aloft, and takes a prospect of the invisible eternal things, being the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; fixing its Eye upon, and conversing with those things, and so it overlooks, and looks beyond and above all visible temporal things; 1 *John* 5. 4. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* And this I take to be the main thing intended in the Text: As if the Apostle had said, *We look not unto things that are seen*; that is, we live not by sence, but by Faith; as 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. we set not sence on work on visible temporal things, but we set Faith on work on invisible eternal things, and by our Faith on invisibles, we get victory over visible temporal things.

Q. *But how doth Faith help a Soul to take it off from minding and over-much regarding visible temporal things?*

Ans. Faith doth it many ways.

1. First, by carrying the Soul to pitch its Eye upon, and take a view of the invisible God in Christ, and his God in Christ: *Heb.* 11. 26. *Moses* saw him that was invisible, and thereby he endured the evil things of this World, and despised the Riches and Honours of *Pharaoh*'s Court: Alas! how vile and base are all earthly things, in comparison of the Eternal God, the All-sufficient Good? And by Faith the Soul pitcheth it self upon this God, and applieth and appropriateth this God to himself. This God is my God, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. *Psal.* 31. 14. *I said, Thou art my God*; and 48. 14. *This God is our God*; and 73. 26. *My Portion.* Also, by Faith the Soul is carried to pitch upon Jesus Christ, in

in whom dwells all fulneſs, and by Faith ſees his Intereſt in this Bleſſed Jeſus, and thence he is mounted aloft above all viſible temporal things, having his Affections raiſed and fixed upon Jeſus his Saviour, who ſits at the *right hand of God*, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. This ſight of God, and Jeſus by Faith, takes off the Minds and Thoughts of Believers from thoſe things below, having higher, better, and more excellent things above to feed and fill their Thoughts with; for no man can look up to Heaven and look down to the Earth at the ſame time; as, while *Paul* preſſed forward towards the mark, he forgot thoſe things which were behind; and as Jeſus is ſaid to *be in Heaven*, *John* 3. 13. that is, his Heart and Mind was there, when he was on Earth, even ſo it is in ſome meaſure with all true Believers, *their converſation is in Heaven*, *Phil.* 3. 20.

2. Faith receives the Teſtimony which God hath given in his Word concerning thoſe viſible temporal things, that they are all *vanity and vexation of ſpirit*, and therefore judgeth them not worthy of too much place in their Hearts and Minds.

3. Faith raiſeth the Soul to a believing ſight of a better World than this preſent evil World is, and of better things than thoſe viſible temporal things are; of a better Life, an eternal Life; of a better Reſt than can be had here, even an everlaſting Reſt; of a better Inheritance, 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. an incorruptible and undefiled one, that fadeth not away; of a better Country than Earth at beſt, even an Heavenly *Jeruſalem*; and of a better Houſe than the beſt Houſe here, even *an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, whoſe Builder and Maker is God; and of a better City, even a City that hath Foundations; Faith kens that better and more enduring Subſtance in Heaven, *Heb.* 10. 34.

and

and that infinitely-better Company, the Blessed God, and the Blessed Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, the glorious Angels, and the Spirits of just men made perfect, and better Joys, Delights and Pleasures, than can possibly be enjoyed here, and also far better Employment, and indeed, all better things; and all these better things the Believer by Faith doth realize to his Soul; and all those, so exceeding great and glorious things, the Believer knows he must have, cost what Cost: and therefore the strongest streams of his Thoughts, Cares, Studies, and Pains run this way, and after these things, even after these better things above. Faith looks within the Veil, unto those unseen Excellencies, to those invisible Glories, to be with God, and with Jesus, and to enjoy that full and perfect Communion with them above; and when a Soul is pitcht and fixt by Faith here, setled and centred on things above, then farewel deceitful World.

4. By Faith the Soul apprehends, as the most transcendent Excellency of those things above, so by Faith the Soul sees its absolute necessity of those things: Intereſt in God, Peace with him, Union with Christ, Title to Eternal Life, &c. are things not only infinitely better than all visible temporal things; but, saith the believing Soul, these things I must needs have, I shall be eternally undone without them: It's true, I must have Food and Raiment also, these are necessary too, but not so necessary: If I have God and Christ, I shall not want Food and Raiment, the faithful God hath past his Promise that I shall want no good thing; I may be happy for ever without Riches and Honours, without earthly Friends and Relations, without Health or Liberty, but not without God and Christ, oh!

oh! there lies my Happiness: One thing is needful, only needful, absolutely needful, and that is, my Interest in God and Christ; and the making sure of that deserves and calls for our most serious and utmost Thoughts and Cares.

If a man were condemned to dye, whereupon would he spend his most serious Thoughts, but upon getting his Pardon, if there were any hopes of it, and not in providing himself fine Clothes, or a full Table? The application is easie.

5. By Faith a Soul is perswaded, that neither the evil things of this World can hinder, nor the good things of this World can further his Happiness, nor his way to it, of themselves: but rather the contrary; for a man may be poor in this *World*, yet rich in Faith, and an Heir of the Kingdom; as, *James* 2. 5. and a man may be rich in this World, yet poor in Soul, and an Heir of Hell, as we see in *Dives*.

6. Faith is a powerful, a victorious, conquering Grace: *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.* *Stephen* was full of Faith and Power, *Acts* 6. 8. *The work of faith with power*, 2 *Thess.* 1. 11.

Faith brings all visible temporal things under the Believer's Feet; it gives the Believer power to use the *World*, and not to abuse it, not seeking Rest and Contentment in it; to use it moderately, without damage and detriment to the Soul; to use it for God's honour, its own spiritual advantage, and the good of others; and power to keep it out of the Heart, Christ dwelling there by Faith; to use the *World*, and not losing our Hearts, our Peace, nor our Consciences in it: Faith gives the Soul power to withstand the Threats and Temptations of the *World*, and power to be willing to leave it, and

to

to go to a better *World*. Oh, the mighty power of Faith! and by the Power of this Faith, gracious Souls are taken off from those visible temporal things.

And so much for the Doctrinal Part.

The Application follows.

First, For Information.

If it be the Character and Duty of gracious Souls, because visible things are temporal, therefore they must not, they do not much mind or regard them.

I. It follows then, that Earthly-mindedness, worldliness is a great Evil, and very unbecoming true Christians, for their *minds and conversations are in Heaven, Phil.* 3. 19, 20. There is the discriminating Character, both of the gracious and ungracious, a vast difference between them, the one mind Earthly things, the other have their *conversation in Heaven.* Most People look on those things which are seen; all seek their own things, those that they count their own; and those are mostly, chiefly, and principally minded, as appears manifestly, thus:

1. By the stream of their Thoughts, which runs steadily upon visible temporal things, having vain Minds.

2. By the common current of their Discourses, their Talk is all of the *World*.

3. By the tide of their Affections, Love, Joy, Fear, Sorrow, Delight, all run strongly *Worldward*.

4. By the course of their Actions, their Time, Pain, Care, all is spent about the *World*; rising early, going to Bed late, eating the Bread of Carefulness,

fulneſs, and all about the World. This is a great Evil, becauſe expreſly forbidden, *Matth.* 6. 19. *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures on earth,* Joh. 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which periſheth. Col.* 3. 2. *Set your affections upon things above, and not upon things below.* And this Worldly-mindedneſs is contrary to the Practice of true Chriſtians, as in the Text, *We look not on thoſe things which are ſeen:* So *Phil.* 3. 20. And it is the Character of ſuch as are in a ſtate of Nature, and that cannot pleaſe God: *Rom.* 8. 5, 8. *They that are after the fleſh do mind the things of the fleſh:* Such are not crucified to the World, but conquered and captivated by it; yea, crucified by it; conquered by the Profits, Honours, and Pleaſures of it, and meer Slaves to theſe; and crucified by the Croſſes and Loſſes of the World; their Hearts and Spirits lye under the Feet of theſe, and are at the beck of theſe; their Hopes and Comforts lye all at the Courteſie of the World; and this is a woful Bondage.

Remember this, we can never conclude, that we are truly gracious, until we have Grace enough to keep God and our Hearts together, and to keep the World and our Hearts aſunder. 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *Love not the world, nor the things of the world, for he that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Woe to them that have their Portion in this World, *Pſal.* 17. 14. who have their good things here, who have laid up their Treaſures upon Earth, and there have their Hearts. That Text *Phil.* 3. 19. is enough to terrifie all ſuch; *Their end is deſtruction who mind earthly things.*

Inf. II. It follows from the Premiſes, that Contentment with our Condition, and with any portion

tion of visible temporal things, is a great Virtue, and well becoming Christians: Discontent proceeds from our over-minding, and over-valuing, and over-loving earthly things; and it is a very great Evil, for it practically denies God's All-sufficiency, his Wisdom, Soveraignty, Faithfulness, and Mercy; it disgraceth the Gospel and Godliness, and is in it self a great Plague.

Q. *But how shall I do to be content, content to be deprived of my dear Relations, Estate, Health, Liberty,* &c.?

A. Read Mr. *Burroughs's* Book of *Christian Contentment:* Take also these Directions.

1. Labour to make God your own, and then you will have a full and sufficient Ballance to all your Losses. He is God All-sufficient. Weigh well those two Scriptures, 1 *Sam.* 30. 6. & 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.

2. Labour to make Christ your own; he offers himself to you in the Gospel, with all he is, and with all he hath. And in him dwelleth all fulness, he is all in all: *Psal.* 23. 1. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,* said *David.*

3. Search the Scriptures, and be acquainted with the many exceeding great and precious Promises that are there, suitable to every Condition you can be in. Act your Faith on them, and apply them; lye upon and suck those full Breasts of Consolation.

4. Pray for Contentment, and pray earnestly for the manifestation of God's Love to your Souls, and that will so satisfie and content you, that any measure of earthly things will content you.

5. Be much in Heavenly Meditations, look upon invisible and eternal things, spend serious frequent fixed Thoughts on them.

6. Consider your Deserts: No person in the World, how little soever he hath of the good things of the World, but hath much more than he deserveth, and more than he doth well improve; and how much soever he hath of the evil things of the World, he hath infinitely less than he deserved, for every thing out of Hell is a Mercy: It's of the Lord's Mercy we are not consumed.

7. Consider, if you be true Christians, you have the Spirit of Christ in you, *Rom.* 8. 9. Jesus Christ had a most contented Spirit: Contentment is the inseparable Companion of true Godliness. 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. *Having food and raiment, let us be content.* Let us, that are Christians, who have the Great GOD for our Portion, and Blessed Jesus for our Treasure, and Heaven for our Inheritance, having Food and Raiment, any Food, any Raiment, though never so coarse, let us be content, *content with such things as we have,* Heb. 13. 5.

Inf. III. Thirdly, hence it follows also, that great is the Folly of all by Nature, and great is their Blindness; which appears in this, that they value, prize, mind, and follow after visible temporal things, much more eagerly and earnestly than after invisible eternal things: This is but too manifest, *Isa.* 55. 2. *labouring for that which is not bread:* not Bread for their Souls, and for that which cannot satisfie their Souls. God, Christ, Heaven, is not in all, scarce in any of their Thoughts, *Psal.* 10. 4. & 49. 11. the god of this World blinds Mens Eyes, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. and the World bewitcheth Mens Minds, and the Deceitfulness

ness of Sin so strangely deludes Men, that they become meer Slaves and Captives to the *World*.

Ask any Man or Woman what things are best, Earth or Heaven, God or the Creature, their Souls or their Bodies, Saving Grace or Worldly Goods? and *all* will confess, that God is best of all, and Heaven better than Earth: If it be so, why then is this *World* minded more than *God?* and, why is *Earth* minded more than *Heaven?* The Apostle tells us the true reason, *Rom.* 8. 5. which is, because Men are in the Flesh, in a state of Nature, under spiritual blindness and darkness: *This their way is their folly*, *Psal.* 49. 12. It is a great Folly to chuse the worst things, and refuse the best; to mind Earth, and forget Heaven; to pursue the Creature, and neglect God and Christ: Folly indeed! to mind day and night, and follow hard after visible temporal things, and neglect eternal. *The pleasures of sin are but for a season, but at God's right hand are pleasures for evermore*; *Psal.* 16. last.

O, the bewitching nature of this *World!* that it should so gain and hold the Affections of Men and Women! that altho *the World* and *the fashion of it passeth away*, and *is but a shadow*, yet that Men *should* so drown themselves in it, as to make them forget the *World* to come. How unreasonable a thing is it, to spend all our Thoughts, Cares, and Pains about *visible temporal things*, seeing they are so transitory and perishing, so much beneath our never-dying Souls, so utterly *unable* to satisfie or content our Souls, or to comfort us in our Troubles, or to stand us in any stead in Death and Judgment? Were not our Minds most strangely blinded, it were impossible that, having Reason and Understanding, we should so waste our Time and Strength

in

in pursuit of earthly things, seeing the Great God and the Blessed Jesus offer themselves to become ours; and seeing Heaven, and Happiness, and Glory is before us, and offered to us, and we may have them if we will, and so be happy for ever; O wonderful Folly and Blindness! the Lord enlighten and convince us.

Inf. IV. Fourthly, it follows, that a true Christian lives by Faith, and not by Sence; for he that is a Captive to the *World*, hath but little Faith, if any; 1 *John* 5. 4. *For faith overcometh the world*; where Sence riseth, Faith falleth. Now, saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. *We walk by faith, not by sence.* This is our Practice, and this is the very meaning of the Text: *We look not at those things that are seen*; that is, we live not by Sense, but by Faith.

Q. *But what is it to live or walk by Sense?*

Ans. The great good, or end, or happiness that a carnal Heart proposeth to it self, in which it expecteth Content, is some good that is the object of Sense, something that may be sensibly enjoyed, and this they pursue and labour after. The Rule by which they judge things, is Sense; if things please Sense, and seem good to Sense to the Eye, to the Ear, to the Taste, to the Appetite, they judge them to be good things; if not pleasing to the sense, they are counted evil things. That which affects their *Hearts*, is Sense, Sensible Comforts, or Sensible Crosses, Sensible Gain, or Sensible Loss; wanting the light of God's Spirit, to open their Understandings, they live only by Sense, and are but Sensual; *Jude* 19. *Eccl.* 11. 9.

and

and so they walk after the Flesh, and mind the things of the Flesh, chiefly and principally. This Life of Sense is variously expressed, *Prov.* 3. 5. *A leaning to their own understanding*; Psal. 81. 12. *A walking after their own hearts lusts, and in their own counsels*; Jer. 9. 14. *Walking after the imaginations of their own hearts*; Isa. 65. 2. *After their own thoughts, in a way that is not good.* Isa. 5. 21.

This is not the way of true Christians; but they walk by Faith, and not by Sense.

Q. *What is it then to walk by Faith?*

Ans. The great Good, or End, or Happiness that a gracious Soul aims at, and seeks content in, is that which is presented to him by Faith, out of the Word of *God*, and that is twofold, to wit, the glorifying of *God*, and the enjoyment of him; these are *things not seen*; these are not the Objects of Sense, but of Faith: To glorifie God in Christ, and to enjoy God in Christ, this is the end of the Saints walk and way; and all this is by Faith.

This *Life of Faith* is demonstrated several ways.

1. He that lives by Faith is guided by the Word of Faith, and that is the whole Gospel, and every Truth in it; such a Soul gives up it self to the conduct of the whole Word of *God*; it walks by no other Rule.

2. It yields it self up to the government of the Spirit of Faith, the *Holy Ghost*; it is obedient to the motions, stirrings, counsels of the Holy Spirit, harkning to that word behind him, *Isa.* 30. 21. not willingly grieving nor quenching it.

3. It walks in the way of Holiness, for this Faith purifies the Heart; *Acts* 15. 9. & 26. 18.

4. It always leans upon Christ, and draws strength from him, to hold on and hold out in the way of Duty; by it the Soul abides in Christ, *John* 15. 3. and by drawing of strength from Christ it can do all things, *Phil.* 4. 13. notwithstanding all opposition.

5. By Faith the Soul commits himself to *God* in *Christ*, in all his ways, and trusts himself and all his concernments with *God*; *Psal.* 37. 3, 5. *Prov.* 16. 3. 2 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Psal.* 112. 7, 8. *Isa.* 26. 2, 3.

Such a Soul can satisfie himself with what he receives by Faith, as really and truly as others can satisfie themselves with Sense; the faithful Promises of *God* are as sweet to him as the sensible Possessions and Enjoyments are of others, *Heb.* 11. 13. they saw the Promises afar off, and embraced them.

Now, when a Soul can depend upon *God* alone for All, in the want of all outward means, and make progress in the ways of *God*, through all difficulties, and not draw back; and doth in his whole course of Life so walk, work, and act, as becomes one that doth believe such glorious things in the other World, as he doth believe; when there is a suitableness in his Life to what he believes; then, oh then, he may truly be said to live by Faith. And this is the Life that in some degree every true Christian lives, and desires to live; and this living by Faith, and not by Sense, is that which is meant in the Text.

2 *Use.* The second Use is of Exhortation to us all, to look off from visible temporal things. Let us labour to get our Hearts crucified, and our Affections mortified to all earthly things; to draw away our Minds as much as possible, from the things

things of this Life. A great part of the Gospel, and of the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, tend to this, to take off our Hearts and Minds from setling and fixing upon earthly things.

I. Some *Motives* to this.
II. Some *Directions.*

I. *Motives.*

1. Consider, it is the expres Command of *God, Col.* 3. 1, 2. *Set not your affections on things below, 1 John* 2. 14, 15. *Matth.* 6. 19. *Lay not up for your selves treasures on earth.* This we should urge on our Hearts.

2. Consider the vanity, emptines, insufficiency, unsatisfactorines to the Soul, of all earthly things; *Eccl.* 5. 10.

3. The great inconstancy and uncertainty of them, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Prov.* 23. 5. 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. Riches and Honours go from one man to another, as Birds hop from Tree to Tree.

4. How prejudicial they have been to those that have had the most of them, but beneficial to very few.

5. That these earthly things are all defiling things, like Pitch; and corruptible and corrupting things, being full of Snares and Temptations, are but like Thorns to most.

6. No real Happines in them, for Reprobates may have them; and they may consist with *God's Wrath*; therefore we should not set our Hearts upon them.

II. *Directions shewing how we may get off our Hearts, and draw off our Minds from them, for our Hearts are so glued to them, we cannot but look on them, and mind them.*

It is not easie work to do, but let us use the means that *God* hath appointed, and try what we can do.

1. *First*, Let us labour to be transformed in the Image of our Minds, renewed in the Spirit of our Minds; *Rom.* 12. 1. *Eph.* 4. 23. New Natures we must get, this must be done; our Old Minds are vain, and altogether suitable to earthly things.

Q. But how shall we get New Minds?

A. 1*st*, Pray earnestly to *God*, to give you new Hearts, to repair his Image on you, to create a clean Heart in you, as *David* did, *Psal.* 51. 10. to give you his Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. to sanctifie you throughout, 1 *Thess.* 5. 23. to regenerate you by his Word and Spirit; *Jam.* 1. 17,18. *Tit.* 3. 3,4,5. Oh pray, pray that *God* would cast you into a new Mould, to root out the old corrupt Principles of Nature in you, and to plant new heavenly Principles of the Divine Life and Nature in you, to work a real change in you.

Go to Jesus, beg his Spirit; He was crucified to all *visible temporal things*, beg of him to give you those *Waters of Life*, *Joh.* 4. 14. which he hath promised to them that *hunger and thirst* after them: Beg of him to make you of his mind; labour to put him on by imitation.

2*ly*, Look

2*ly*, Look up to *God*'s Covenant, and lay hold on *God*'s Covenant, *Psal.* 71. 19. and most earnestly beg the Lord to take you into his Covenant, and to remember his Covenant, and to perform it to you, and wait upon *God* continually: Study the Covenant of Grace, and lay hold on it; for in the Covenant *God* promiseth to become our *God and Portion*, and if once *God* be ours, all the good of Heaven and Earth is ours, and then we shall but little mind *visible temporal things*.

3*ly*, If we would be regenerated, we must search the Scriptures diligently, attend on the Word preached and read, for the Word of *God* is the Seed of Regeneration, the Word of Grace, ordained to work Grace in Souls, *Acts* 26. 18. Look often into the glass of the Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17, 18. and look thorow it unto the glory of the Lord, that shines forth in it; the glory of his Love, and Grace, and Mercy, and Wisdom; and Power, and Holiness, and Righteousness, and Faithfulness; all which are wonderfully displayed in the Face of Jesus Christ, in this glass of the *Gospel*; and by frequent, serious, believing, fixed looking into this glass, and upon the glory of God in Christ therein represented, we shall be changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

4*ly*, Study Jesus Christ much, set him still before you for a Pattern, labour to imitate him, and to be like him, and to walk as he walked: And this is the way to get new Minds.

2 *Direct.* *Secondly*, If we would get off our Hearts from earthly things, let us labour for a clear knowledge and a firm belief of, and familiar acquaintance with *invisible eternal things*; take a few

few instances: The Resurrection of the Body, as set out in 1 *Cor.* 15. The second Coming of the Lord Jesus, the manner and ends of it, 2 *Thess.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9. The glorious manifestation of the Sons of *God*, and their full Redemption. That when Christ, who is their Life, shall appear, they shall appear with him *in glory*, *Col.* 3. 3. The Day of Judgment; the separation of the Sheep from the Goats; the final irrevocable Sentence that shall then pass on all Mankind; the Saints passing into Heaven with Christ, their Souls and Bodies united, and their triumphant entrance with the Captain of their Salvation into the Paradise of *God*, to see the Blessed God *face to face*, to live in his presence, *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore*; to live with God in perfect Light, Love, Purity, Rest, and Peace for ever and ever; fully and for ever freed from all Sin and Misery. Oh, these are the things most worthy of *all* our most serious, most fixed, and most constant Meditations.

We should first labour to get those things into our Heads, *fully* and *clearly* to understand them, and should not be contented with a dark confused knowledge of them, but should labour for a distinct knowledge of them; and therefore should earnestly beg the light and assistance of the Holy Spirit, to instruct and teach us, as *Eph.* 1. 18. and look up to *God*'s Promise, which is, that all his People *shall be taught* of him, that we may have a *spiritual knowledge* of them. And then we should labour to draw these *invisible eternal things* down into our *Hearts*, and labour to draw up our *Hearts* to them, for with the *Heart* Man believeth. We should beg of *God* to open our *Hearts* wide to embrace them, to relish, and savour, and be affected

fted with them, and exercise our loves, hopes, desires, delights, hunger and thirst after them, considering also the transcendant Excellencies of those *invisible eternal things*, above *all visible temporal things*; and our own real concernment in them, and likewise their nearness to us, they are not far off; we shall shortly possess that Kingdom promised, and inherit that Glory purchased for us, if we be true Believers; *But a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

Considering also, that all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions have reference to invisible eternal things. If they be good and holy, they have reference to eternal glory; if bad and wicked, they have reference to eternal Misery; for such as is our *Heart* and *Life* here, such shall be our eternal state hereafter.

3 *Direct. Thirdly*, Be much in the Meditation of *Heavenly Things*, if we firmly believe, and are fully perswaded, that there are indeed such great and glorious, such excellent things in the other World, as the *God of Truth* assures us of, in the *Word of Truth*; and if we believe, or have good ground to hope, that we have a title to them, and shall shortly enjoy them, why are they not more in our Thoughts? why do we not more meditate on them? Our frequent fixed Meditations on *Heavenly things*, will so sweeten and delight our Souls, and yield such satisfaction to us, as to take off our Minds from *Earthly things*: And to Meditation add Prayer, That *God* would raise and lift up your *Hearts* to mind things above.

4 *Direct. Fourthly*, Discourse frequently and feelingly of the vanity and emptiness of *visible*

temporal things, and of the reality and excellency of *invisible eternal things*: If *Heaven* and *Glory* be in your *Hearts*, they will be in your Mouths. Consider also the shortness of the time you have to converse with visible temporal things, 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. and study a crucified Christ more, by that you will come to be *crucified to the World*, and *the World* to you; *Gal.* 6. 14.

5 *Direct. Fifthly*, Consider you that are Christians, are not at home, you are in a strange Country, you are but on your Journey, in your passage to your Father's house, to your long home, and therefore you should not much mind the things of this World.

6 *Direct. Sixthly*, Consider what you lose all the while you are inordinately minding earthly things; you lose not only your precious time, but much inward joy and peace, and much sweet communion with God, which you might have in minding of, and meditating upon *Heavenly things*: *Psal.* 63. 4, 5. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness;* ——— *When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.*

7 *Direct. Seventhly*, Let us work a few more serious Considerations into our *Hearts* and *Minds*, to take them from Earthly things.

(1.) That whatever any Man or Woman hath of *visible temporal things*, Death will put a *full end* to them all, and after Death they *all* shall partake of invisible and eternal things. *Matth.* 25. 46. *The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.*

(2.) That

(2.) That every Man and Woman in the World is either made for ever, or undone for ever, as they are related and entituled unto the invisible eternal good things or evil things of the other World; they are made for ever, if related and entituled to the invisible God and Glory; and undone for ever, if not: So that our Eternal Happiness or Misery depends not on our relation or title to visible, but to invisible things.

(3.) Such as is our Title and Estate now, to the one or other, such it will be to all Eternity. *As the tree falls, so it lies: as death leaves us, so will judgment find us.*

(4.) This looking off from earthly things is the way to grow and encrease in Grace, for Worldly Cares do choak, deaden, and weaken Grace, cloying the Affections, entangling and encumbring the Thoughts, much hindring the exercise of Faith and Love, which are the principal Graces whereby holy Souls enjoy Communion with God.

(5.) By this you will have more Communion with *God*; for the less we look downward, the more we shall look upward; and the more we look upward to *God* and *Christ*, in the actings of our Faith and Love, the more will *God* and *Christ* manifest themselves and their love to our Souls.

(6.) This will support us in Affliction, and comfort us in a dying hour; when our Affections are crucified to the World, we shall not be *unwilling* to part with it. *Col.* 3. 3. *We are dead*, saith the Apostle; that is, to the World. And this supported those in this Chapter; they were *crucified to all visible temporal things*, therefore they could easily part with them.

3 *Use. Thirdly*, by way of Examination. By this gracious frame of Spirit, we may know our ſpiritual ſtate, whether we be born of *God* or no, whether in *Chriſt* or no; to wit, by this, Whether our Hearts and Minds are more ſet on God, Chriſt, and Heaven, or on the World. *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*; they are ſafe, come Plague, Sword, Fire, Faggot: But who are in Chriſt Jeſus? He tells us, *They that walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.* So Ver. 5, 6. *They that are ſpiritually minded*; *they that have their converſation in Heaven.* Phil. 3. 20. Col. 3. 1, 2. *They are riſen with Chriſt.* So *Pſal.* 73. 25, 26. If we be born from Heaven, we are bound for Heaven: Heavenly-mindedneſs is as good an Evidence for Heaven as any is, and Earthly-mindedneſs is as ill a Character as can be. Let us now try our ſelves by this: Where are our Hearts, and Minds, and Affections moſtly ſet, on Heaven or Earth, on Chriſt or the Creature? Let our Conſciences ſpeak: Surely this one Rule of Tryal will help us to know in what ſtate we are.

Leſtly, For Conſolation to Believers, in reſpect of outward Loſſes and Troubles, that they are *all viſible and temporal things* that we can loſe, and but *temporal things* that we can ſuffer, which are but light and ſhort, as we have ſeen; but our inviſible eternal Mercies, they are *all* ſure, and can never be loſt. If we had enjoyed our earthly Comforts a little longer, it could have been but a little longer, they and we muſt have parted: All viſible things are but temporal; our faireſt Flowers are fading, our ſweeteſt earthly Mercies are periſhing: And here is our Comfort, that if we be

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in Christ, we shall be delivered from *Eternal Death*, from *Everlasting Destruction*, from the *Wrath to come*. If we have our part in the first Resurrection, the Second Death shall have no power on us. Let this comfort us, that the Comforts we lose here are but temporal Comforts, and the Troubles we suffer here, are but temporal Troubles. And this brings us to the second Point observed from the Text, which was,

2 Doct. *That a right and true Judgment of earthly things, will help to support the Lord's Servants under their Afflictions.*

Of which I shall speak but briefly, because much of what hath been said in the former point doth confirm this.

Heb. 10. 34. *They took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods*; And why? *but because they knew* in themselves *they had in Heaven a better and a more enduring substance.* They had a right Judgment both of Earth and Heaven, both of Earthly and of Heavenly Things, and knew the infinite worth and value of Heaven above Earth; they knew that Heavenly things were the most real, the most substantial, the most lasting things; and that Earthly things were temporal and perishing, and therefore not to be compared with, much less to be valued or minded above Heavenly things.

Q. 1. *But how shall we attain to a right Judgment of Earthly things?*

A. (1.) We must judge of them as God, who is only wise, judgeth of them, and then we be sure to judge

judge truly and rightly of them. Now God hath declared in his Word his Judgment of them, *Isai.* 40. 6, 7. *The mouth of the Lord hath spoken this. The voice said, Cry; and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth.* Psal. 39. 5, 6. *Verily, every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity. Surely, every man walketh in a vain shew,* Psal. 103. 14, 15. we are but Dust: *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.* Job 14. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.* So 1 Pet. 1. 24. *Jam.* 1. 10. & 4. 14. *What is our life? It is but even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* This is the Judgment of God concerning Man, all Men; They are but *Dust*, but a *shadow*, but *Grass*, and the Life of Man *very short, and full of trouble*, but even as a *bubble*, but a *vapour*; and we may be sure, that the Judgment of God is according to Truth. And then, for all the things of this World, *Solomon*, by the Spirit of God, hath declared what they all are. *Eccles.* 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* Vanity and Vexation. Riches, Honours, Pleasures, Relations, Friends, Liberty, all pleasant Accommodations, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit.* This is the true and right Judgment we should have of all earthly things.

(2.) We must judge of these earthly things by the experience of the best and wisest men that ever lived upon Earth; they will *tell* us from their own experience, that they are *all vanity and vexation.* So *Solomon, Job, David, Moses*; Psal. 90. 4, 5, 6.

Yea,

Yea, we all know this by our own Experiences every day; that *all flesh is as grass, and as the flower of the field*: How soon do all our earthly Comforts wither and perish, our dearest and neerest Relations wither and dye away, our Health and Strength, our Life, and all, still withering and perishing? [*See largely of this in Dr.* Reynold's *Three Treatises, the first part, concerning the vanity of the Creature.*]

(3.) Once more judge of Earthly things by the evil use we make of them while we have them, through Satan's Temptations and our own Corruptions, (as was shewed before) and also what cloggs and hinderances they are to our Souls, in our way to Heaven: Altho' Life, and all the Accommodations of Life, as Health, Strength, Liberty, Estate, Friends are good things in themselves, and given us to be helps to Holiness, and to Heaven; yet we must confess to our shame, that all our Earthly Comforts, yea, and our animal Life it self, doth very much, most times, hinder our Communion with *God*, hinder us in the Service of *God*, keep our Hearts at too great a distance from God; and many more Evils they bring upon us; all which considered, we have but little reason so to value them as we do, nor to let our Hearts and Affections so to run out after them. Thus let us take a right judgment of *all* Earthly things. It is true, that so far forth as these Earthly things are useful to us in the Service of God, and further the good of our Souls, so far forth we ought to love and prize them, and praise *God* for them, and pray for the continuance of them; but so far forth as they are hinderances to us in Holiness, and bring Sin and Guilt on our Souls, as too oft they do, so far forth, and in that respect, we had better be without them than with them; their Room would

would be better than their Company: And when they prove Snares to us, and like *Solomon's* Wives draw away our Hearts from *God*; and like *Dalilah* to *Sampson*, betray our Souls into the hands of our ſpiritual Enemies; then ſurely it is the goodneſs of *God* to ſeparate them from us, and ſtrip us of them, and we ſhall have cauſe to bleſs God for ſo doing.

Sickneſs and Weakneſs improved, is better for our Souls than Health and Strength abuſed: Reſtraint and Confinement improved, better than Liberty abuſed: Solitarineſs improved, is better than a Family and Company abuſed: Poverty improved, better than Riches abuſed, *&c.* Thus you may get a right Judgment of Earthly things.

Q. 2. *But how will this right Judgment of Earthly things help us to bear our Troubles in this World?*

A. 1. By acting our Faith upon the Word of *God.* Believe, and be fully perſwaded of the truth, which God, the *God of Truth*, hath ſpoken concerning all Earthly things: Believe that *all fleſh is graſs*, that *life is but a vapour, &c.* here lies the root of all our Impatience and Diſcontent under our Loſſes and Earthly Comforts, even our Unbelief; we do not *fully* and *firmly* believe they are ſuch vain things that we are deprived of, but *graſs*, but *as the flowers of the field.* Juſt like a man that finds a Box or Bag of Counters, and takes them to be all pure Gold, and greatly rejoyceth in what he hath found; then after a ſhort time he loſeth his Counters, and then he is exceedingly troubled for the loſs of them, becauſe all this while he took them for Gold; but if once he comes to believe, that it was but a Box or Bag of Counters, then he grieves

no

no more. So it is with us; we believe not, that all our Comforts are *vanity and vexation*; we look not on them to be so, but that there is much contentment, and sweetness, and satisfaction to be had in them: And therefore we grieve immoderately when we lose our Counters; but if we did firmly believe they are but Counters, Shadows, Grass, Vapours, we should not be so cast down.

2. Meditation and Consideration of the true nature of all Earthly things, as God hath shewed us in his Word; often thinking, pondering, and meditating on their vanity, uncertainty, transitoriness and deceitfulness: Without this due and serious Meditation, a right Judgment of them will do us no good. When God smites our Comforts, maketh our fairest Flowers to wither, blasteth our flourishing Grass, then let us consider what God hath smitten and blasted, nothing but grass, but flowers. What have we lost? Nothing but Shadows, but Counters: This deep Consideration will support us under our Losses. Consider also the Experience of the Saints, who in *all Ages* have found these things to be but *vanity and vexation*.

3. Add Prayer to God, That He will throughly convince your Minds of the vanity of *all earthly things*, as *David* prayed, *Psal.* 39. 4. That we may judge of them as *God* judgeth of them, and not otherwise; and then it will not so much trouble us to part with them. So much for a right Judgment of the good things of this World: We must also labour to get a right Judgment of the evil things of this World, as Poverty, Sickness, Imprisonment, Disgrace, loss of Friends and Relations; we usually judge amiss of these also, and therefore become impatient.

Now,

Now, that we may have a right Judgment of these things also, we must observe the former Rules.

1. To judge of these Evil things as God in his Word judgeth of them. Now God tells us in his Word, that *Afflictions are short and light*; that is comparatively, as was shewed before; that his ends and designs in all the Afflictions of his People, are good and gracious; of which largely before; that they are Tokens of his Fatherly Love to us, and Evidences of our Sonship; that they are for our spiritual and eternal profit, to take away our Sins, and to make us partakers of his Holiness, and to prepare us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; that they are needful and necessary for us, Afflictions being as necessary to God's People, in their passage to Heaven, as Water is to a Ship, to carry her to her Port.

Now, if we judge of Afflictions thus, as the Only-wise God judgeth of them, we shall bear them with much patience.

2. To judge of them as the wise, good, and holy men of God do judge of them. *Moses* chose rather *to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* Holy *David* professeth, That *it was good for him that he was afflicted*, *Psal.* 119. 71. [*Upon which Text I have written at large by it self.*] So the Primitive Christians, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17, 18. and *Heb.* 10. 34. And thousands now in Heaven, and upon Earth, can seal to this Truth, That Afflictions have done them good.

3. Let us judge also by our own Experiences, that as the good things of this World have been, by Satan's Temptations, and our own Corruptions, very hurtful to our Souls; so the evil things of this World have been, through the *Grace of God*,

God, sanctifying them to us, very profitable to our Souls, and we have cause to bless *God* for them.

And as Earthly things, good in themselves, become evil to us, so evil things, so in themselves, but by the Blessing of *God* on them, become good unto us.

Now this right Judgment of the evil things of this World, will much support us under them,

1. If we strongly act our Faith in believing what *God* in his Word hath said of these Evil things, that they *are all but light and short*, that He hath such gracious ends in them; and if we act Faith and Hope upon the many exceeding great and precious Promises in the Word, made to his People in their Afflictions, and relye upon his Faithfulness in them, we shall be sweetly supported under them.

2. If we duly meditate and consider of the good Fruits that our Afflictions shall bring forth in us, in due time; and do duly ponder upon the gracious ends of *God* in them, it will, doubtless, mightily uphold us under them.

3. And if we add fervent Prayers to *God*, to give out all those spiritual Blessings of Afflictions to us; and wait on him for the blessing, hoping, desiring, and panting after these Blessings; we *shall* be enabled to bear up under them *all*.

Application.

Let us bewail our wrong and false Judgment of Earthly things, both of the good and evil things of this World, and pray earnestly for a true, spiritual, and right Judgment of them; let us *fully* submit our Judgments to the Judgment of *God*, and setled-

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ly acquiesce in *God's* Judgment; let us pray earnestly for a spiritual Understanding, and a renewed Judgment; let us look on *all visible temporal things*, as God looketh on them, and settle it in our minds, That the Judgment of God is right and best; and let us not lean to our own Understandings, and by this means we shall be much *helped* to bear *all* our Afflictions with Comfort and Patience.

So much of this Doctrine.

Now to proceed to the last words in this Verse:

2 COR. iv. 18.

But to the things which are not seen, for they are eternal.

THIS is another Act of Faith: Faith enables the Soul not only to *look* off from things which are seen, for they are *temporal*; but also to *look unto those things which are not seen, for they are eternal. We look*; the original word is σκοπέω, *prospicio*, to look seriously, diligently, earnestly, to look upon a thing as his mark and scope, to look with ardent desire to attain that which he looks for. Now saith the *Apostle, We look not on those things which are seen, temporal things*, as our mark and scope, with such eagerness and diligence to attain them; we see not such *worth* and *excellency* in them, as to spend our best Thoughts about them, and our ardent Affections upon them; no, no, but we look on *things not seen*; we look on unseen things

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as infinitely more worthy, and more highly meriting our best Thoughts and Affections; for those unseen things are eternal things, and therefore more worthy of our Affections.

Two Points of *Doctrine* arise hence.

Doct. I. *That truly-gracious Souls do most seriously mind, and most diligently intend and aim at unseen eternal things; upon these their thoughts are mainly and mostly fixt, and about these their greatest Care and Study is employed.*

Doct. II. *That the due minding of, and meditating upon unseen eternal things, will much help to support the People of God under all their Sufferings in this World.*

Doct. I. First, *That truly-gracious Souls do most seriously mind, and most diligently intend and aim at unseen and eternal things.*

Here we must enquire,

1. What those invisible eternal things are.

2. The Reasons of the Point.

1. What they are. They are things not seen, and they are eternal; unseen to the bodily Eye; opposed to the visible things of the World, Riches, Honours, Pleasures, Friends, Health, Liberty, &c. those good and evil things of this World; these we look not unto, but to invisible, and they are,

1. *First*, The Invisible God, whom no man hath seen, nor can see with bodily Eyes; *Col.* 1. 15. 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Moses* saw him that is invisible, *Heb.* 11. 27. *We*, saith the Apostle, *look unto him*, *Mic.* 7. 7. *I will look unto the Lord*, *Psal.* 34. 5. Gracious Souls make God their aim, and their end, how to serve

serve, and please, and glorifie him, and how to have Communion with him, and to enjoy him. This is the chief Study, Care, and Labour of gracious Souls, to be accepted with *God*, and to bring *Glory* to him; 2 *Cor.* 5. 9. We are alwayes looking to *God*, to his Precepts, to obey them, to his Promises to believe and rest upon them; to his Providences, to observe and comply with them, answering them by suitable Duty.

2. *Secondly*, We look unto our Blessed Jesus, the Image of the Invisible *God*, the eternal Son of *God*; He was once visible, and seen in the flesh, and shall be so again at his *second coming*, *Acts* 1. But now we see him not, yet now we believe in him, and look on him by Faith: And that we may look upon and behold this unseen Jesus, and by Faith and Love, to enjoy Union and Communion with him, to know him living in us, and to have fellowship with him in his Death and Resurrection, and in his Life, to receive of his fulness *Grace* for *Grace*: This the Saints aim at, and spend their Thoughts and Cares about, and make this the main and principal work of their Lives; *Phil.* 3. 8, 9, 10. That they may be joyned to Christ, married to him, engrafted into him, partake of his Spirit, Life, and Grace; that they may be conformable to him, and enabled to walk as he walked; that he may sup with them, and they with him; that he may dwell in their Hearts by Faith, and take up his abode with them, and manifest his Love unto them; that they may grow up in all things like unto him. These are the Aims, Intentions, Desires, Prayers, Longings, and constant Endeavours of truly-gracious Souls. Not to be rich, and great, and honourable in the World, but to partake of the unsearchable Riches of Christ,

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to get and possess Jesus, this Pearl of greatest price, to be *rich in Faith*, to have a clear Title to the Crown of Life, which Jesus hath purchased and promised; to live in Christ, and to please, honour, and enjoy Jesus. This is their Chief Labour.

3. The holy Spirit is *invisible and eternal*; the gracious Influences and Operations of the Holy Ghost on the Hearts and Spirits, (though the effects may in some sense be said to be visible, and of eternal efficacy) yet the Operations are in some sence invisible; those Graces of the Spirit, which I take to be those Waters of Life, which our Lord speaks of, *John* 4. which spring up to Eternal Life; the Joy, the Comforts of the Spirit, the anointings, teachings, guidings of the Spirit; the witness and sealings of the Spirit; all these are invisible and eternal things, and these are the things that natural men cannot know nor discern, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12, 13, 14. Strangers intermeddle not with this Joy, because Strangers to it. It is hidden *Manna*: But these are the unseen things, that gracious Souls mind, seek, and breath after, and always long for: Oh, that they may be filled with the Spirit, filled with the Graces and Comforts of the Spirit, and enjoy Communion with the Spirit.

4. The Word of God, the glorious Gospel, that is invisible and eternal, not in the Letter of it, for that is to be seen in the Book, but the Mysteries of it are hidden Mysteries; *Matth.* 11, 25. These things are hid from the wise and prudent of the World. It's true, the sound of the Gospel is gone out abroad throughout the World; but the power and efficacy, the vertue and inward workings of it, the sweetness of it, that is invisible to the Eye of the Body, and hidden to the World, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10.

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God reveals those things to his People by his Spirit: The infinite Beauty of Christ, his transcendent Excellencies, the Beauty of Holiness, the surpassing sweetness of the Promises, the glory of Heaven, with many, many other unspeakable Excellencies, which are held out in the Gospel; all which bodily Eyes cannot see, nor carnal Hearts understand.

The powerful enlightning, quickning, transforming, nourishing, strengthning, refreshing, and comforting power and vertue of the Gospel, but very few see and feel; none but such as are spiritualized, and whose Understandings are savingly enlightned; *Eph.* 1. 17, 18, 19. There are great and glorious things represented in the Gospel; but Men's Understandings must be enlightned before they can see them: Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel; *Heaven* and *Hell* opened in the Gospel, but not to be seen by the bodily Eye. Hence the *Gospel* is said to be hid, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. and this word abideth for ever, 1 *Pet.* 1. 25. and it is an everlasting Gospel. Now, saith the Apostle, *we look to the Word of God, and mind the glorious Mysteries of the Gospel, and feel the sweet and powerful effects of it; we desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby; we esteem the Word of God above our necessary food*; Job 23. 12, 13. and *it is sweeter to us than the honey or honey-comb*, *Psal.* 19. 9.

5. We look unto, and mind all the exceeding great and precious Promises, which are in the Word of God; the vertue, sweetness, and good of them are all invisible to *carnal* Eyes. Tell a *carnal* man of the goodness and sweetness of the Promises, it is a Riddle to him; give him present Enjoyments, he never tasted any sweetness in them;

them; but true Christians look on them as exceeding rich things, and look up to them, and embrace them, and live upon them; they could not live without them: The Promises are dry Breasts to carnal Hearts, they can draw no vertue from them; but they are full Breasts to gracious Souls: *Psal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed,* (that is, in the Promises) *to see the goodness of God in the land of the living.*

The Promises, That God will be our God in Christ, and our Portion, and exceeding great Reward, *Gen.* 17. 1. That He will be a Sun and a Shield to us, give us Grace and Glory, and will with-hold no good thing from us; *Psal.* 84. last. Promises of Pardon, of Peace, of Holiness and Blessedness, of Rest for our Souls, *Mat.* 11. 28,29. Promises of his good Presence with us in all our Troubles; of Supports, Supplies, and of a gracious issue out of all; gracious Souls trade in the Promises, converse with the Promises; these they mind and rest upon, and find Sweetness and Comfort in.

6. And Lastly, We look unto all those great and glorious things which the Great *God* hath prepared for us from the foundation of the World, and which our most dear Lord Jesus hath purchased for us by his most precious Blood. Oh, the great and glorious things which *God* our Father hath prepared for us! that blessed Vision of *God*, that Kingdom of Heaven, that Life eternal, that Crown of Glory, of Life, of Righteousness, that Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*; that everlasting Rest; all these things are invisible and eternal; *And unto these unseen and eternal things, we,* saith the Apostle, *look, and set our mind upon.* And also the great and glo-

glorious things which our Lord hath purchased; as Peace with God, his Favour, Acceptance with him, Adoption, Sonship, Heirship, Remission of Sins, an heavenly Inheritance; these are all invisible and eternal things, great and wonderful things, things of the greatest excellency and highest concernment; *And*, saith the Apostle, *we that are Gospel-christians, we look to these things; upon these we spend our most serious thoughts, and our best affections; these possess our hearts and minds, and we live in the continual prospect of these unseen and eternal things.*

Before I come to the Reasons of the Point, a little more to open this Act of gracious Souls, and the Object of it.

1. For the Act, *Looking*; which may note these things.

1. It notes Reality, it is no Fancy, Dream, or empty Imagination, but we look, we see, we behold them; the Eyes of our Understandings being enlightned, and our Minds illuminated by the Spirit of God; and having the Spirit of Faith in us, we discern and behold those invisible and eternal things: *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* We do as fully believe them, as if they were visible to our Bodily Eyes.

2. It notes Certainty, what we see with our Eyes, we are certain of, we are fully perswaded of them, *Heb.* 11. 13. hence this Sight is called Knowledge, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1.

3. Fixedness, it is not glancing, or casting an Eye on them, but we look on them, that is, fixedly and diligently; we aim at them; we look on

on them as our Mark and End. Thus for the Act.

II. For the Object; they are things that are not seen: What they are, hath been showed; the Properties are these:

1. They are spiritual things; so in their Nature, and revealed by the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. and they are spiritually discerned, and not otherwise.

2. They are all high, great, and glorious things; yea, the highest, the greatest, and the most glorious things: All other things are but Dross and Dung in comparison of them.

3. They are the choicest and the best things, most worthy of our Hearts and Minds, and of our choicest Affections: What is the Chaff to the Wheat? What is the Dross to the Gold? What is Earth to Heaven, or the Creature to God?

4. They are Heart-transforming, Heart-gladding, Heart-elevating, Heart-strengthning things, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17, 18. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. These things looked unto by the *Eye of Faith*, will change the Heart, and cause *joy unspeakable and glorious*.

5. They are real, solid, substantial things, not Shadows, as visible temporal things are; *Hebr.* 10. 34. They *joyfully took the spoiling of* their *goods*, for they were but Shadows, Trifles; *because* they *had in Heaven substantial things*. The things of this World are all vain, lying Vanities, things that are not; *Prov.* 23. 5.

6. They are Soul-satisfying, and Heart-contenting things; such as have them shall never *thirst* more, *John* 4. 14. that is, inordinately and immoderately after Earthly things.

7. And Lastly, They are eternal things, permanent, abiding, lasting, everlasting things; eternal Life, eternal Glory; everlasting Consolation, everlasting Rest: We shall ever be with the Lord.

" O my Soul! Can I be a true Christian, and " be a Stranger to this Practice of converſing with " thoſe invisible eternal things? Can I be re- " generate, born of *God*, born from above, and " be a Stranger to this Practice? Can I be quiet " in Conſcience, ſo long as I live in the neglect " of this? Can I groundedly hope to live and " converſe with *God* and *Chriſt* for ever hereaf- " ter, and be ſuch a Stranger to this converſe with " him here? Can I have any Support in Trouble " without this? Can I have any true Comfort " in Life or Death, or bid Sickneſs or Death " welcome, and be a Stranger to this? Certain- " ly no: Therefore, O my Soul, labour for more " familiar Acquaintance with thoſe invisible eter- " nal things, and exerciſe thy ſelf more in the " Meditations of them.

The Grounds and Reaſons of the Point, Why gracious Souls do moſt ſeriouſly mind, intend and aim at invisible eternal things.

Reaſ. I. Becauſe they are commanded ſo to do, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *Set your affections upon things above, not on things below*, Mat. 6. 19, 20. *Lay up for your ſelves treaſures in Heaven, not in Earth*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 19.

II. Be-

II. Because truly-gracious Souls are endued with invisible, divine, and eternal Principles, which do encline, dispose, and suit them to those *invisible and eternal things*: *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. They are begotten of God, born of God; their extraction is heavenly; 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. They must needs mind God, for they are begotten of him, He is their Father, they have his Image on them; and they must needs mind Christ, for he is formed in them; and the Spirit, for they are born of the Spirit: Heaven is their Father's House, their own Home, their Inheritance; the Principles of the Divine Nature enclines and disposeth them to mind things above. As *they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh*, so *they that are after the spirit, do mind the things of the spirit*; for this is the characteristical difference between the *carnal* and the *spiritual man*, *Rom.* 8. 5, 6. 1 *John* 5. 4. Every thing acts according to its Principles. If Men and Women have no other Principles in them, but such as they brought into the World with them, which are only earthly, and have no other Spirit than the Spirit of the World in them; they cannot mind heavenly things, for such as is the earthly, such are they that are earthly; Heavenly things are contrary to their Natures, and to their Principles, and therefore they cannot mind them. But holy Souls have Principles of the Divine Life, and they live the Life of God.

III. Because their Hopes are set, grounded, fixed on those invisible eternal things; their hopes are not in this Life, but in God, in Christ; Glory, Heaven, and Eternal Life, are the Objects of the hopes of all truly-gracious Souls; 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *Rom.* 5. 2. *Heb.* 6. 18, 19. *Tit.* 2. 14.

Tit. 1. 2. 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. 1 *John* 3. 3. We must needs mind them, and set our Affections upon them, because we hope to enjoy them for ever. *Phil.* 3. 20, 21.

IV. Because the People of God have had experience in some measure of the sweet and powerful Influences and Operations of those invisible eternal things on their own Hearts and Spirits; they have tasted that the Lord is gracious; they have had fellowship with the Father and the Son, in some degree; they have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, in many saving fruits and effects on them; they have felt the power, efficacy, and comfort of the Word and Promises; and they have in some measure received the *first-fruits* and *earnest* of their *Inheritance*; *Rom.* 8. 23. *Eph.* 1. 13, 14.

V. Because by all these things gracious Souls live, and in all these things is the Life of their Souls: Their Life is hid with Christ in God, and should they not mind God and Christ? Christ liveth in them, and they in him, *Gal.* 2. 20. They live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, *Gal.* 5. They live by, and live upon the Promises, *Job* 23. 12. They live by Faith, in the purchased, promised, prepared Inheritance; they live in hope of *Eternal Life*, *Tit.* 1. 2. and *rejoyce in hope of glory*, *Rom.* 5. 2. They live in hope of a better Resurrection; they groan after their House in Heaven; they seek a Country, an heavenly; and therefore they cannot but mind and intend, look unto, and aim at those invisible eternal things. Our natural Life, much less our spiritual Life, doth not consist in the things which we possess; that is, in visible temporal things; for, *in* God *we live, move, and have our being.*

VI. Be-

VI. Because these invisible eternal things are the only things that are suitable and satisfying to the Souls of gracious persons; Earthly things are not suitable to Heaven-born Souls; Riches, Honours, Pleasures, not suitable, nor satisfying to immortal Souls, which are begotten of God: Earthly things are no Bread for Souls; *Isa.* 55. 2, 3, 4. *John* 6. 27. They are all but Ashes, but Wind, Husks, Chaff, not Food for Souls; these are suitable to the Body, Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats; but God, and Christ, and the Word, &c. for the Soul, for the renewed gracious Soul; other things will not content it.

VII. Because these invisible eternal things are the best, the choicest, the chiefest, the most excellent things, the principal things, as *all* will confess, and therefore most worthy to be minded and looked after; *Phil.* 4. 8. GOD and Glory, Heaven and Happiness, are the best things for certain, *Heb.* 10. 34. & 11. 16. The Saints Happiness lies in those invisible eternal things: They may be happy without visible temporal things, but they can never be happy without the other: And indeed, all visible temporal things are not worth minding at all in comparison of the other. Oh, that we could believe this, and act accordingly.

VIII. Because those things are most sure and certain, *incorruptible and undefiled*, and *that fade not away*, *Matth.* 6. 19. *nor moth, nor rust, nor thieves* can *spoil* us of these; 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. *Heb.* 11. 9, 10. & 13. 14. 1 *Pet.* 1. 4. *Psal.* 48. 14. *This God will be our God for ever.* None can say so of Relations or Possessions, of Health, Wealth, or Liberty. Jesus Christ is the Believer's for ever; their Joy is everlasting, none can take it from them; their Peace is everlasting, their Kingdom everlasting.

IX. Because by minding of, and by setting their Affections upon those invisible eternal things, they are much freed and discharged from the Snares, Fears, Cares, Sorrows, Entanglements, Incumbrances and Temptations, that accompany the minding of those visible temporal things. *Nil sentit in Nervo, cum Anima sit in Cœlo.*

Oh, the intolerable Burthens, the unavoidable Snares, Cares, and Fears that attend these earthly things! how are the Minds of Men rack'd, tortured, distracted, distempered, macerated with these? while they mind them eagerly and inordinately, What cross Passages fall out? what Disappointments do they meet with? how strangely are mens Minds bewitched with these things? what unruly Passions are oftentimes stirred up, and thence they break out into many uncomely words and actions, piercing themselves thorow with many Sorrows, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. Against this our Lord caution'd his Disciples, *Luk.* 21. 34. *Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life.* And by these worldly entanglements many times God is forgotten, Conscience wounded, Peace broken, Guilt contracted, Duty neglected, and Sorrows multiplied.

But now, when we can get off our Hearts from Earthly things, and can get them up above these things, and can fix our Minds upon those high and heavenly things; how are our Spirits discharged and disburthened, and our Minds eased and quieted: *Psal.* 63. 5, 6. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.*

O, the

O, the sweet Peace and Tranquility of Mind that those enjoy, that *look above*, and *live above*, and have their *conversation in Heaven*; who walk with God, and talk with God, and constantly converse with things above: *To be spiritually minded is life and peace*, Rom. 8. 6.

X. Because by this minding Heavenly things the Saints get good Proof and Evidence of their Title unto, and of their Interest in God and Christ, and to those *invisible eternal things*; 1 *Joh.* 5. 4. *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3. *Joh.* 3. 6. 1 *Cor.* 15. 48. This is a good Proof that we belong to God and Heaven, because we mind them, and set our Hearts upon them.

XI. Because by the minding of those things above, the People of God are wonderfully supported under all their Troubles in this Life; and by their Heavenly-mindedness their Troubles are alleviated and sweetned to them; as in the Text and Context: *We faint not, while we look not at those things which are seen, for they are temporal; but at those things which are not seen, for they are eternal.* By our looking off from *temporal things*, and by our looking on upon *eternal things*, we are supported under all our Sufferings.

XII. And Lastly, Because this is the way to salvation: For if *the end of those who mind earthly things* be *Destruction*, as *Phil.* 3. 19. then the end of those who mind *Heavenly things*, must be *Salvation*.

Thus much for the grounds of the Point.

Q. *But wherein consists this Duty of* looking *unto invisible eternal things? What is this* minding *of them? And how must this Work be managed?*

Anſ. 1. It conſiſts in the diſtinct knowing, and right underſtanding of thoſe *inviſible eternal things*; to know God and Chriſt, the Myſtery of *God* and *Godlineſs*, *Col.* 2. 3. *Epheſ.* 1. 17, 18. Let us pray as the Apoſtle doth there; *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, would give unto us the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him:* That *the eyes of our underſtandings may be enlightned*, &c.

2. In a full perſwaſion of Heart, of the Reality and tranſcendent Excellency of thoſe inviſible eternal things, that they are indeed the moſt real, the moſt ſubſtantial, and the moſt excellent things, infinitely ſurpaſſing all temporal things; *Phil.* 3. 8,9. *Pſal.* 73. 25. If we believe not this, and be not fully perſwaded of this, that Heavenly things are incomparably better than Earthly things, we ſhall never ſet our Hearts upon them.

3. In the frequent and lively Actings of Faith, Love, Deſire, Hope, Hungrings, Thirſtings, Pantings, Breathings, Longings and Expectations upon and after thoſe Heavenly things; *Pſal.* 42. 1,2. & 63. 1, 2, 3, 8. *Iſa.* 26. 9. Oh, that I had a clearer, fuller ſight of *God*, more acquaintance with my Bleſſed Jeſus, more ſpiritual reliſh of Divine things, more experience of the ſaving workings of the Holy Spirit, more ſenſe of the fatherly love of God in Chriſt: Oh, that I had clearer Evidences of my title to Everlaſting Reſt: Oh, that the Love of God may be ſhed abroad on my Heart abundantly: Oh, that I could taſte more ſweetneſs, and feel more Power in the Word and Promiſes: Oh, that I could converſe more with God, and have my Converſation more above. Thus holy Souls pant and breath after God and Heavenly things.

4. In

4. In eſteeming, prizing, valuing thoſe inviſible eternal things above all earthly temporal things; *Pſal.* 30. *In God's favour is life*; *Pſal.* 63. 3. *His loving-kindneſs is better than life*; *Pſal.* 4. 6. *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* This will put *gladneſs into our hearts, more than the encreaſe of corn and wine.*

5. In applying and appropriating theſe inviſible eternal things to our own Souls; *My Lord, and my God, my Jeſus*; *The kingdom prepared for me, the crown belongs to me.*

6. In frequent converſing with them by meditation, contemplation, conſideration; ſpreading and ſpending our moſt ſerious Thoughts, and our moſt fixed and deepeſt Cogitations on them, and never leave thinking and thinking; pondering, muſing, ruminating and dwelling on them, until our Hearts be warmed, and our Affections kindled, our Deſires enlarged, and our Delights raiſed. *Pſal.* 37. 5. *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord.* *Pſal.* 104. 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* Alas, we have ſo few, and ſuch ſhort, and inconſtant, and unfixed Thoughts of God and Chriſt, of Heaven and Glory, that our Hearts are not affected, nor raiſed and enflamed.

7. And laſtly, In a converſation ſuitable to thoſe inviſible eternal things: *Phil.* 3. 20. the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians had their *Converſations in Heaven.* This alone is true, real minding of, and converſing with thoſe Heavenly things, when we live the life of God, live like God, like Jeſus, walk in the Spirit, to be *holy in all manner of converſation*; 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. To be like Chriſt in Meekneſs and Humility; *Matth.* 11. 28. and in Purity; 1 *John* 3. 3. in contempt of the World, and Vanities of it; in Heavenly-mindedneſs.

And thus we ought to look unto and mind invisible and eternal things, and this will bring *true Joy* and *perfect Peace*. *Isa.* 26. 3. *Psal.* 112. 6, 7.

Moreover, I conceive, that the Apostle and Primitive Christians did look also unto the *invisible eternal Evil things*, and spent some Thoughts upon them; as, *The Terrour of the Lord, Everlasting Destruction, Eternal Death, the Wrath to come*, &c. These things they minded two ways.

1. By way of Praise and Thanksgiving, admiring the Love and Grace of God in Christ, by which they were delivered from those invisible eternal Miseries, which their Sins had deserved; as we find often in their Praises.

2. In their Diligence to escape those eternal Evils, labouring for the assurance of their full deliverance from them; constantly exhorting all men to *give all Diligence*, that they might not fall short of their Everlasting Rest.

But principally, I think, they looked unto those *invisible eternal Good things*, to secure their Title to them, and Intereſt in them; and so minding them, as still to press forward towards the Mark of the Price of the high Calling; and with the fore-thoughts and fore-sights of them, did support their Spirits under their Troubles, and sweeten their passage through this present evil World.

So much for the Doctrinal part.

The

The Application.

Firſt, *For Information.*

1 *Inference.* Hence appears the extream Folly and Madneſs of People by Nature, who look at, mind and aim only at viſible temporal things, but totally neglect Inviſible eternal things. God, Chriſt, Heaven, is not in all, ſcarce in any of their Thoughts; *Lovers of* themſelves, of their own things, of Profits and *Pleaſures*, more than of God, *Phil.* 1. 21. 2 *Tim.* 3. 4. that make themſelves the Mark they aim at; but the Glory and Honour of God, the pleaſing and enjoying him, are ſtrange things to them, things they never minded, never thought on: God complains of this againſt the Jews, *Hoſ.* 8. 12. *I have written to them the great things of my Law, but they counted them as ſtrange things.* So may Jeſus Chriſt juſtly complain of Men under the Goſpel; "I have revealed the great and glorious Myſteries of the Kingdom of "Heaven, the Myſteries of Salvation, the un-"ſearchable Riches of the Grace and Love of "*God* in the Goſpel. Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Goſpel; the true and only way to Heaven and Eternal Life, to Everlaſting Happineſs, is clearly made known in the Goſpel; the only Means to get an Intereſt in the great God, in Jeſus Chriſt, in the New Covenant; how to get Pardon of Sin, Peace with God; how to be juſtified, ſaved, and glorified for ever; *All theſe things* are *fully* and *clearly* revealed in the Goſpel. The inviſible eternal things of the World to come, which are the greateſt Realities

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and Excellencies, the choiceſt, greateſt, and beſt things. But woe, and alas! how little are thoſe things minded? It is *Corn*, *Wine*, and *Oyl*; Who will ſhew us any good, any viſible temporal good?

Now, is not this extream Folly and Madneſs, for reaſonable Creatures, made for God, made capable of enjoying God, and all thoſe inviſible eternal good things; for them thus to labour and pant after the Duſt of the Earth, to ſpend their Thoughts, Minds, and Strengths upon that which cannot ſatisfie, which will not endure; but thus to waſte precious Time, and Breath, and Spirits for periſhing fading things, and neglect inviſible eternal things; the incorruptible Crown, that *fadeth not away*, the undefiled Inheritance, the everlaſting Kingdom, eternal Life and Salvation; not to look on thoſe, nor mind them, nor labour for them: Yet this is the common neglect of the World. It is amazing Madneſs, aſtoniſhing Folly. Thus God expreſſeth, *Jer.* 2. 11, 12, 13. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this; be ye horribly afraid; be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord: For my people have committed two evils; they have forſaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns, that can hold no water. Prov.* 1. 20, 21, 22. Yet ſuch is the Madneſs of *all* by Nature, and it is greatly to be lamented.

This ſhews alſo the blindneſs and darkneſs of Men by Nature, that they cannot ſee the excellency of thoſe inviſible eternal things, nor their own abſolute neceſſity of them, and concernment in them: The God of this World hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine into them: This glorious light

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ſhines upon them, and ſhines into many of their Heads; this Light they cannot reſiſt; but it ſhines not into their Hearts, to transform and change them, as it doth into the Hearts of God's Elect; and it's greatly to be lamented; 2 *Cor.* 4. 4.

2 *Inf.* Secondly, Hence appears the beguiling, bewitching nature of the World, that it ſhould ſo ſtrangely win and gain the Hearts and Affections of Men and Women, and ſo eaſily prevail with them, while God and Chriſt are offered to them, and are not embraced: Heaven gates are opened to them, and they invited, entreated, perſwaded by Promiſes, by Threatnings, commanded to come and enter, but they will not; they make light of it; no Perſwaſions will prevail; they turn the deaf Ear to all: But for the World, how ſoon are People perſwaded to embrace it, to follow hard after it, to count no Time nor Pains too much to attain it?

What is there in thoſe viſible temporal things, in thoſe glittering vanities, that ſhould ſo allure, entice, and ſeduce rational Souls, and ſuch as profeſs that they believe all thoſe better things? But indeed, they do not believe them, whatever they profeſs: Infidelity is the Root of all; Men do not believe what they profeſs to believe. It were impoſſible that the World ſhould be ſo heartily, ſo eagerly follow'd and purſued, if the vanity and vexation of it, the emptineſs and inſufficiency of it, the uncertainty and tranſitorineſs of it, were indeed believed: It were impoſſible that the great and glorious *God*, the Alſufficient Good, that bleſſed Jeſus, that Heaven and Eternal Happineſs, ſhould be ſo ſlighted and neglected, if they were *truly*, *really*, and *heartily believed*.

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It is most strange, and yet most true, that People should yield up their Hearts unto, and spend their best Affections upon the things of this present evil World, and can think and speak *delightfully* of them, but have no mind to think or speak of *eternal things*. Oh, this beguiling, bewitching, and deceiving World! and, oh, these corrupt, carnal, deceitful Hearts of ours, that suffer the World thus to deceive us!

It cost the Heart-blood of Christ to deliver his People from this present evil World, *Gal.* 1. 4. Could we apprehend the Mischief this World hath done us, and doth still do us, we should have but *little* kindness for it; and if once we could attain the Assurance of our title to that World above, we should not care how soon we were gone out of this.

3 *Inf.* Thirdly, Hence appears the Unreasonableness of immoderate *Worldly Joy, Sorrow, Fear, Cares* about *visible temporal things*. Being they are but temporal, passing, transient, momentany things, why then so much care to get and keep them? Why so much fear of losing them? Why so much Joy in possessing? and, why so much Trouble in parting with them?

Why so much Care and Fear about Life it self, *which is but a Vapour? Jam.* 4. 14. Alas, we rejoice in things of nought, and are grieved for the loss of Shadows; for such, and no better at best, are all *visible temporal things*, in comparison of *invisible eternal things*. Let us all bewail this Folly: O, when shall we be wise? How long shall we simple ones love this our sinful Simplicity? *Prov.* 1. 22. Oh, how long e're we be able to discern between Good and Evil? till we know the one thing needful,

ful, and approve and pursue the things which are most excellent? and give up our Hearts entirely to God and Christ?

4 *Inf.* Fourthly, Hence appears the absolute Necessity of Regeneration: Seeing we are by Nature so ignorant, dark, blind, stupid and dead, that we cannot see nor understand the things of God, nor the things that belong to our own Eternal Peace: Therefore we should earnestly seek and pray for Renewing Grace, and that Christ would give us the *Light of Life*; and that God would beget us anew, and give us his sanctifying quickning Spirit, and infuse new spiritual Principles of the Divine Nature into our Hearts, and thereby take us off from inordinate minding *visible temporal things*, and turn our minds another way, even towards Himself, and towards Christ and Heaven, that there we may center and place all the Affections of our Hearts, all the Desires and Delights of our Souls: This must be done by the mighty power of God, and we must seek him diligently, to effect this work upon us; and we must also attend on his Word preached and read, and diligently and conscientiously read the Word, searching the Scriptures for this very end and purpose, and fervently beg God's Blessing on the Word, that it may prove to us a Word of Grace, a renewing, converting, sanctifying Word, the Seed of Regeneration. *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. *Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.* *John* 17. 17. Thus must we Labour to be regenerated, or else we *shall* never get off our Minds from earthly things.

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Second *Use*; *by way of Examination.*

We *All* hope to go to Heaven when we dye, and to enjoy *all those invisible eternal good things*, do we not? Let us be so kind to our own Souls, as to try our Title, and the grounds of our Hopes: Sure here is one Mark, by which we may know whether our Hopes be well grounded or no; to wit, by our Heavenly-mindedness. What do we aim at mainly, mind chiefly, look on, and look after principally? Is it *Heaven* or *Earth*? *Visibles* or *Invisibles*? Let us examine our selves: Which way runs the Stream of our Thoughts, the Current of our Affections, the Tide of our Discourses? Which way runs it strongest, steddiest? Put this Question close to our Consciences, and require a direct Answer: Let us not *dally* and *shuffle*, but be serious. Our Apostle makes this a discriminating Character of a Child of God, of one in Christ, and above the power of Condemnation, of one that is born again: *Rom.* 8. 5. *They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh*; the Profits, Honours, Pleasures, Ease, Health, Liberty, of the Flesh; that is, they mind these things *mainly*, *mostly*, *principally*, *chiefly*; most heartily, most seriously, most affectionately, most delightfully. These *visible temporal things* lye most upon their Thoughts, and lye neerest their Hearts. This is their Character, and it appears in *all* their Words and Actions.

But they that are after the Spirit, that is, are born of the Spirit, born of God, are in Christ, they mind the things of the Spirit; the grace, the work, the witness, the comfort and joy of the Spirit; they mind the things which the Spirit hath revealed in the Word; God, and Peace with him; Christ,

Christ, and Union with him; God's Covenant, and Interest therein; Eternal Life, and Title thereto; these invisible eternal things, they mind these mainly, chiefly, mostly, principally, most heartily, affectionately, and most delightfully and constantly. This is their Character, and this is manifest also in their Words and Actions. Now, let us try our selves; What Character have we? Which of these two? If we will not do so much for our own Souls, as to take a little pains in trying, we have not much love to them. A man may know very much of his State by this: And is it not worth a little Labour, to know whether we be in Christ, or no; and whether we shall be Saved or Damned eternally? Let us put it home to our Consciences: Say, O my Soul! what dost thou mind most? What are thy Thoughts most exercised about? Whereupon are thy Affections most fixedly set? This is a searching mark; oh, that we did all try our selves by it! we should be much more heavenly than we are.

The best of us all will have cause of shame and sorrow, cause of self-suspicion and jealousie, when we strictly compare our selves with this Rule; we shall find our Hearts so earthly, so carnal, our Minds so fleshly, so set upon visible temporal things, but our Thoughts on invisible eternal things; so short, so weak, so inconstant, so seldom, so soon tired, and our Affections so unsetled, so unfixed, that we shall have great cause to bewail our selves, and cry out with St. *Paul, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death: Rom.* 7. 24. And this will make us cry to God also, to renew the Spirits of our Minds, and to transform the Image of our Minds; and this should make us look up to God's Covenant

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for new Hearts, for *Hearts joyned and united to the Lord*, *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Pſal.* 57. 7. & 108. 1. Oh, what cauſe have we to bewail the frequent departings and wandrings of our Hearts from God, their ſlidings from God, and to cry with holy *David*, *Quicken me*, *uphold me*. Our Hearts are not fixed nor ſtayed on God; we do not abide with God.

Third, *Uſe of Exhortation*,

To this great Duty of moſt ſerious minding of, and looking unto *inviſible eternal things*. O, let us mind, and look unto, and aim at God, Chriſt, the Spirit, the Word, the Promiſes, the great and glorious things purchaſed by Chriſt, and prepared for us in the other World: Oh, mind the full enjoyment of *God* and Chriſt in Heaven for ever and ever; to dwell with him, *in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of joy, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore*. Let us mind eternal things in good earneſt, with all our Hearts and Souls; Look off, look off viſible temporal things, ſhut your Eyes to the World, turn away your Eyes from beholding Vanity: But open your Eyes towards Heaven, hold your Eyes to inviſible eternal things.

Here I ſhall ſhew,

I. The Hinderances to this Duty.
II. Means to help us to perform it.
III. Motives to perſwade to it.

I. The Hinderances, which are many, and which muſt be avoided.

1*ſt*, Hinderance is, living in any known or beloved Sin; this will keep us down from heavenly Meditation, *Heb.* 12. 1. No looking unto Jeſus, ex-

except we lay aside the Sin that doth so easily beset us; in some, Passion; in some, Weariness of well-doing; in others, Pride or Covetousness, is the Sin that doth easily beset them: This must be laid aside, whatever it be; it must be repented of, and reformed, 1 *Thess.* 5. 22. Abstain from all appearance of Evil; Sin interposeth between God and our Souls, and hides his Face from us: If we would mind the Heavenly Word of God, so as to profit by it, in hearing or reading of it, we must lay aside all known Sin; 1 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2. Sin divides us from God and heavenly things. If we regard any Iniquity in our Hearts, God will not hear our Prayers. *The sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

2*ly*, Worldly Cares, Fears, Joys, Sorrows: If we suffer these to take up our Hearts, and to fill our Minds and Thoughts, there will be no room for heavenly things: We must therefore be watchful, to cast out, and keep out those bad guests; *Luke* 21. 34. *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful in nothing*: If our Affections be set on visible, temporal things, they cannot be set on invisible eternal things. *No man can serve two Masters, God and Mammon*, saith our Lord. If the World be Master of our *Hearts* and *Minds*, of our *Thoughts* and *Affections*, then surely they cannot be set on GOD, and things above.

3*ly*, Worldly Company, where is nothing but Earthly Discourse. They that are of the Earth, are earthly: Worldly Company will cool the Affections, and dull and deaden the Heart, and draw it from God: Therefore is that Exhortation and Prohibition, *Eph.* 5. 11. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.* True Christians are Christ's Doves, his Turtle-Doves;

Doves, they have no Society with the Birds of Prey; They are Christ's Sheep, what have they to do among Swine? They are his Children, what have they to do among his Enemies? We are not aware of the very great mischief that carnal company doth bring to our Souls. If at any time we have had any communion with *God* in any Ordinance and Duty, and then presently go into vain carnal Company, we shall quickly lose all savour and relish of *God* and *Heavenly things*; as if you eat Hony, and presently eat Gall after, you lose all the taste of Hony: And that's not all, but by being in worldly Company, you will soon be infected, and will bring away on your Spirits the ill savour of the Earth and filthy World; as a man that comes out of a Garden of sweet Flowers, goes and wallows on a stinking Dunghil. The best of us should not go into worldly Company, but as Physicians into a Pest-house, when *lawfully called*, and with our Preservatives with us: We [illegible] so much Flesh and Earth in us, Worldly Co[illegible] will make us more fleshly and earthly.

4*ly*, Pride and High-mindedness. *God re*[illegible] *the proud*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *Psal.* 10. 4. There are many precious Promises made to the humble; *Job* 22. 29. God will *dwell* with the humble, teach them, save them: None have so sweet Communion with *God* as humble Souls. Heavenly things and humble Souls are things very suitable and agreeable one to the other.

5*ly*, Sloth and Idleness. 'Tis easie, we say, to go down the Hill, but not so easie to go up: 'Tis *easie*, because *natural*, and *usual*, and *ordinary*, to mind *visible temporal things*; but there must be Pains-taking, Industry, and Labour used, to raise up our Hearts to *invisible eternal things*; a *stirring*

up

up our selves, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. And we must often *call* upon our own Souls, and provoke one another, and *all too little*. We must have Resolution and Zeal.

6*ly*, The greatest Hinderance of all is *Unbelief*. Men do not fully believe, nor are fully perswaded of the *Reality* and *transcendent Excellency* of *invisible eternal things*: This is the grand Impediment; Why is not the great *God*, the good *God*, the *Fountain of all Goodness*, the All-sufficient *Good*, minded, thought on, loved, feared, trusted, served no more? but because He is not believed, He is not believed to be that which he is indeed, and which he hath revealed *himself* to be, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Oh, the cursed rooted Atheism and Unbelief that is in all our Hearts, more or less!

Why is not Jesus Christ, Precious Jesus, Blessed Jesus, Lovely, altogether Lovely Jesus, the Brightness of his Father's Glory, the Chiefest of Ten thousands, the fairest of all the Sons of Men, *in whom dwells all fulness*; oh, why is he no more minded, thought on, spoken of? why no more admired, loved, and sought after? but because He is not believed. To them, to all them *that believe, he is precious, most precious*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7.

And why is not Heaven and Happiness that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, that *Everlasting Rest*, in the *full and perfect enjoyment of the Blessed God for ever*, thought on, minded, and laboured after more? but because these things are not *fully* believed. O cursed Unbelief!

Men believe that Life, Liberty, Health, Honour, Estate, *&c.* are good things, and therefore they mind them, and labour after them, and count

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count no Pains too much to obtain them, labouring as it were in the Fire to get those things. Those that believed those better things in the other World, counted those *visible temporal things* of this World, but Toyls and Trifles; *Heb.* 10. 34. 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. So *Heb.* 11. throughout. It is our Unbelief is the cause, why God, and Christ, and Heaven have so little of our hearts and minds, so little of our thoughts and affections: Oh, let us *all* bitterly bewail our Unbelief: *Lord, subdue and pardon it.*

These are the *Hinderances.*

II. *The* Means *to help us to this Work, that we may most seriously and most heartily mind invisible eternal things.*

1. *First*, We must labour clearly to know and understand the Truth and Reality, the exceeding Greatness and Excellency of those *invisible eternal things*; as was hinted before; Our ignorance of them is much the cause why we mind them no more. *Ignoti nulla Cupido. No man minds or loves what he knows not.*

Let us set our Hearts in earnest, to consider what it is to enjoy God, who is *All-fulness*; what it is to have Fellowship with the Father and the Son; what it is to have Communion with the Holy Ghost; to have the gracious Presence of the Holy Spirit; to feel the Work, the Witness, the Sealing, the Joy, the Consolation of the Holy Spirit; all which *all true Christians* know and feel in some measure, and rejoice in them.

Con-

Consider also what it is to live in Christ, and to have Christ to live in us, to dwell in our Hearts, to manifest his Love to us; to come in to us, to *sup with us, and we with him*; to take up his Abode with us; what it is to know the Power of his Death, and the Vertue of his Resurrection; to be made one with him, joyned, married to him, made one Spirit with him; and what it is to be made like him here, and what it is to be made like him hereafter, both in Soul and Body, and to appear with him in Glory at last, and to be for ever glorified with him; what it is to *see his Face*, and to *dwell in his presence for ever*. Oh, these are the only things that are worthy of *all* our Hearts and Minds, most worthy of all our Affections and Desires, of all our Labourings, Longings, Pantings, Breathings, Hungrings, and Thirstings of Soul: Oh, shame on us all, that we spend our Affections on Toys and Trifles, on Dreams, Fancies, and Shadows! Oh, that such Folly and Madness, such Brutishness should possess us! Let us lament and lament it. And let us labour to know and understand those high and excellent things, and let us be *fully* perswaded of them, and of their infinite worth and value. These things are worth glorying and rejoycing in. *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom:*

——*But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.*

Let us consider also the exceeding-great and precious Promises, and what our Blessed Jesus hath purchased, and what God hath prepared for his People in the other World; and let us ponder upon, and

and by Meditation work these things into our Hearts and Minds: Labour for a distinct knowledge of all those things: Labour to prove your particular Right and Title to all those invisible eternal good things, and then you will mind them indeed: A bare Knowledge of them, without an Interest in them, will do you no good.

No wise man will much mind those things in which he hath no Interest; let us then search, and try, whether we have any true Title to these things; whether we have any good and solid ground to hope, that we shall one day be possest of them, and shall certainly enjoy them: Then we shall think of them, and speak of them with Joy and Comfort; when we can say with *Paul*, *There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness:* And we know, that *when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

We *all* hope to enjoy that promised purchased Inheritance, *all* hope to see God in Glory, and to be happy; but let us try our Title by the Word of God, by that Word which must judge us *all* at the last day. We may easily deceive our selves, as those in *Matth.* 7. 21, 22. and as the foolish Virgins; no Deceit so easie, nor so common, nor so dangerous, for it is irrecoverable, and a little serious tryal might prevent this Self-deceiving; Self-searching may prevent Self-deceiving and Self-undoing. Briefly then, let us ask our selves,

Is Jesus Christ ours? Then *All* is ours; *All* depends on this. If Christ be ours, God is ours; Pardon, Life, Salvation, Heaven and Earth is ours. 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

Are we Christ's, really and sincerely his? Then He is ours: *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* Are we

we his, all we are, his? Hearts, Heads, Tongues, Time, Talents; are we all his?

Are we new Creatures? 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* Mark it, a new Creature; all old things are pass'd away; and behold, all things are become new; new Insides, new Out-sides, new Principles, new Ends, new Affections, new Desires, new Delights, new Company, new Language; all new, if new Creatures.

Have we the Spirit of Christ in us? *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his,* Rom. 8. 9. Doth Christ live in us? Is Christ most precious to us? Do we believe in him? Let us try the truth of our Faith; doth it purifie our Hearts? Doth it work by Love, by Love to Christ, to all that hath the Image of Christ on it? Doth it overcome the World? Doth it support under Trouble? Let us see that it be Faith unfeigned, the Faith of *God's* Elect.

Have we with all our Hearts chosen the Lord for our Portion, and placed our Happiness in him, fixed our best Loves, Desires, and Delights in him, and have we resigned up our whole selves cordially and unreservedly to him?

Have we broken our League with all Sin, and with all the Idols of our Hearts? Do we hate and detest all Sin, and do we keep a continual watch and war against all Sin?

Have we an equal respect to all *God's* Commandments? Can we deny our selves, and part with all things for Christ?

Are we the Heirs of the Promises? If we be really *Christ's, then are we Heirs of the Promises.* Gal. 3. 29.

Are we the Children of *God*? *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of* all those invisible eternal things; *Rom.* 8. 17.

Now, if we be the Children of *God*, we are led by the Spirit of *God*, *Rom.* 8. 14. As many as are led by the Spirit of *God*, (just so many, and no more) are the Children of *God*. If we have the Image of our Heavenly Father on us, and do love him with all our Hearts, and can trust him, and depend on him in all things, and for all things, and are most careful to obey him in all things; if it be so with us in Sincerity; then have we a good and firm Right and Title to all those great and glorious things in the other World.

And when we can prove our Right to them, and can call them our own, then surely we shall think on them; our Hearts and Minds will be set upon them, all our Affections will be carried out after them. *Psal.* 73. 24, 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

When a Soul can in truth, and upon good grounds say, My God, my Lord, my Jesus, then he will in earnest mind them. *Psal.* 63. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee: To see thy power and thy glory, ——— because thy loving kindness is better than life: my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live: ——— My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.* And *v.* 7, 8. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce. My soul*

soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. And the ground of all this was his Interest in *God; O God, thou art my God.*

2. If we would have our Hearts and Minds set and fixed on *invisible eternal things*, let us seriously consider the nearness of those things, of those *invisible eternal things* unto us, and of us to them; things that are great, but at a distance from us, seem but small things to us, and our little affect us. The time of our departure hence is at hand, and then farewel for ever to all *visible temporal things*; our Houses, our Honours, Estates, and Friends, shall know us no more; we shall have no more converse with, or enjoyment of any *visible temporal thing* for ever; And it will not be long e're this parting come.

God is near to every one of us; Christ is nigh, the Holy Spirit is nigh, stirring and striving with us; the Word is nigh us, even in our Mouths, and in our Hearts, *Rom.* 10. 1. Heaven and Glory are nigh to us, if we be Saints; we are not far from our Father's House, not far from the Kingdom; Hell and Destruction nigh to us, if we be wicked, but a Breach between us and everlasting Damnation; and if we be Saints and Believers, the day of our full Redemption draws nigh, the Coming of Christ is at hand, our Salvation at the very Door.

As it is dangerous for the Wicked to put far off the *evil day*, *Amos* 6. 3. so it is disadvantagious to the Godly to put far off the good day.

We shall shortly, very shortly, enter the Confines of Eternity, and converse with nothing but *invisible eternal things*, those things that now are out of our sight, and too much out of our minds; but it were our great Wisdoms to look on them as

nigh at hand, and to ſpend our Thoughts and Affections upon them. We are diſpleaſed with our Friends, that when we are out of their ſight, we ſhould be out of their Minds: And may not *God* and *Chriſt*, our beſt Friends, be juſtly diſpleaſed with us, that they are ſo much out of our Minds? But though God and Chriſt be inviſible to our bodily Eyes, they are nigh unto us, therefore we ſhould ſtill mind them. *Pſal.* 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord always before me; becauſe he is at my right hand*, &c. *Pſal.* 109. 2, 3, 4, 5.

3. Let us be often diſcourſing and ſpeaking of thoſe inviſible eternal things; let thoſe things be often in our Mouths.

Should not the Children of God be often talking of their Heavenly Father, and of their Father's Houſe, and of that Kingdom and Inheritance which he hath *prepared for them?*

Should not the Heirs of Salvation be often ſpeaking of that Crown of Glory, of Life, of Righteouſneſs that is purchaſed for them, and promiſed to them; and of that *incorruptible Inheritance* that they *are born unto?* 1 *Pet.* 1. 2, 3, 4, 5. Oh! can we have any Title to all the Promiſed Glory, and not ſpeak often of it?

How much is it to be lamented, that thoſe that profeſs themſelves Children of *God*, and Heirs of Heaven, when they come together, that they ſpeak ſo little of *God* and *Heaven!* This is our great Sin, and ſhould be our great Shame and Sorrow.

Whither are we bound? Where are we travelling? Where is our Home, our long Home, our laſt, our everlaſting Home? Where is our Treaſure? Where lies our Inheritance? Is it above or below? Where is our Country? Where is our Father, our Redeemer? Where are all our

pious

pious Relations that slept in Jesus? Are not all these above? And do we so seldom think or speak of these? Shame, shame on us.

Are we born of *God*, born from above, and do we belong to that City, that hath Foundations, to that heavenly *Canaan*, to that *New Jerusalem*? What! and our Minds so glued, our Hearts so fastened to Earthly things, and our Tongues so constantly employed about earthly things? Oh, our idle words! *Matth.* 12. 36. Can our Treasures be in *Heaven*, and our Hearts not there? And, can our Hearts be there, and nothing appear in our words? *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Surely the earthliness, vanity, emptiness, unsavoriness, frothiness of our common ordinary Talk, doth but too much discover the vanity and earthliness of our Hearts. Oh, that we did all of us lay this to our Hearts: The more we talk of these invisible eternal things, the more we shall mind them.

4. Consider, it is the express Duty of every true Christian, to *set his affections upon things above, and not upon things below*, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. Charge the Command of God upon your Consciences; accustom and inure your selves to it: O my Soul, this is as much thy Duty, as to pray, or hear, or read; how long wilt thou neglect it? O, dare not neglect it any longer; begin it presently; call upon God to renew and raise thy Heart.

5. Let us learn that blessed Art of Spiritualizing earthly things, every earthly Mercy, to a Child of *God*, is a taste of Eternal Mercy; every visible temporal thing discovers somewhat of invisible eternal things: This is a sweet work, to converse with God and Heaven in the Creatures; As for instance; When we sit down at Table, re-

member, there is a time coming, when we shall sit down with Christ, and eat and drink at his Table, in his Kingdom; that is, we shall enjoy free and intimate Communion with him in Heaven: And let us labour to raise our Hearts from temporal to spiritual things, and be much in praising, adoring, and admiring God in the Creatures.

6. Be convinced also, that all our happiness and comfort, both here and hereafter for ever, lyeth not in any, or all, of the sensible temporal things, but *all* lyeth in those invisible eternal things: It lyeth not in having *Honours*, *Riches*, *Pleasures*, &c. for a man may be happy without them, as *Job* and *Lazarus* were; and miserable with them, as *Haman*, *Ahab*, *Dives*, and others were. *Psal.* 144. 15. *Yea, happy are the people whose God is the Lord.* Happy indeed, if *God*, *Christ*, and *Heaven* be ours, happy for ever; or else miserable for ever.

7. And Lastly, Let us labour to be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, or else we shall never seriously and heartily mind invisible eternal things; as was shewed before. We must get those invisible eternal Principles of Renewing Grace planted in our *Hearts*, the Divine Nature, the Life of *God*, the Spirit of our heavenly Father, to renew our Spirits, or else we shall never mind those things in good earnest; for which purpose, let us go to *God*, call, cry to him for Renewing Grace, *Psal.* 51. 10. Let us look up to, and lay hold on God's Covenant, *Ezek.* 11. 19. go to the Promise, *Luke* 11. 13. *If you, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give his Spirit to those that ask him?* A precious Promise indeed; let us rest upon this Pro-

Promise, and most earnestly beg *God* to perform it to us. Old Bottles will not hold new Wine, nor old Hearts retain Heavenly things: New Hearts we must have, heavenly, holy Hearts, or we shall never mind heavenly things as we ought.

III. *Motives to this Duty.*

1. Consider, that thus to look unto, and mind invisible eternal things, is the express Character of every true Christian. No man can approve himself to be a true Christian, and be a total Stranger to this Work; for, to be a true Christian, is to be like Christ. Now Jesus Christ minded those invisible eternal things, as is most evident in the whole course of his Life; his Heart was in Heaven while his Body was on Earth, *John* 3. 13. Shall we profess our selves Christians, and not be like Christ, nor have the Character of Christians?

2. Consider, this will be a sure sign and clear evidence to us, of our interest in, and title to all those invisible eternal good things in the other World; *Matth.* 6. 20, 21. Where the Heart is, there the Treasure is. If our Hearts and Minds, Thoughts and Affections are on *God*, on *Christ*, and *Heaven*, it is a sure sign that these are ours. An heavenly Mind is as good a sign that we belong to Heaven as any is; as was also shewed before.

3. This will begin our Heaven upon Earth; these heavenly things minded, affected, delighted in, will yield such joy and comfort, as to begin our very Heaven here; when Faith and Hope, Joy and Praise, Love, Desire and Delight are exercised on *God*, and on *Christ*, and *Glory*, we shall be filled with Joy and Peace; as, *Rom.* 15. 13. 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

Pſal. 31. 7. Oh, then let us labour to begin our Heaven here, by our Heavenly-mindedneſs.

4. This will yield Contentment and Comfort, Satisfaction and Peace to our Souls in every condition: It will ſweeten every bitter Cup: To think on *God* as our Father, and on Chriſt as our Redeemer, Head, and Husband, and on all the ſweet Promiſes, of which we are Heirs, what comfort will this bring to our Souls? *Lam.* 3. 33. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* Iſa. 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* Rom. 8. 28. *All things ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* With many other exceeding great and precious Promiſes, which our good *God* hath made, that our Faith might feed upon them, and find ſatisfaction, or elſe our Souls would faint.

5. This will fit us for every Duty to *God* and *man:* The more we think on God and heavenly things, the more conſcientious ſhall we be in our Duties to Man, becauſe it is for the Lord's ſake, from whom we look for the Reward; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks to Servants, *Eph.* 6. 5, 6, 7. And for Duties to *God*, it will make us ſerve *God* cheerfully, delightfully, and conſtantly, having the Glory of God, the enjoyment of him, and the *Recompence of Reward* in our Eye: Oh, how will it quicken, raiſe, animate, and encourage us! For why are all thoſe great and glorious, inviſible, eternal things propoſed, and promiſed to us, but that we ſhould mind them, aim at them, and live in the lively hopes, and comfortable expectations of enjoying them? *Heb.* 11. 6, 24. & 1. 1, 2, 3. 1 *Cor.* 15. laſt. *Therefore be ſtedfaſt, unmovable, always abounding in the*

the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

6. This will serve to encrease and strengthen Grace; for the more we mind those invisible eternal things; the stronger will be our Love, our Faith, our Hope, and our Patience; yea, the more heavenly and spiritual we shall grow; and the more useful, savory, and profitable in all our Discourses. By our heavenly-mindedness we *shall smell of Heaven* in all our Converses and Communications, to the advantage of others.

7. This is one principal way of enjoying Communion with God here in this World; for by this we open our hearts to God, raise up our Desires after him, spend our Thoughts and Affections upon him; and in these heavenly Meditations God communicates his Light and Love, his Grace and Peace to our Souls. By these Meditations on invisible eternal things, our Souls converse with God, talk with God, walk with God, have our conversations with God; and this is most sweet and contentful to gracious Souls; this is to live in God, and to live the Life of God; and it is the sum of all our happiness here and hereafter. The enjoyment of God's good presence here, in acts of Communion with him, will produce greatness of Joy; and the enjoyment of God's glorious presence hereafter, in the uninterrupted Acts of Communion with him in *Heaven*, will produce *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore*, *Psal.* 16. last.

8. By this looking to, and affectionately minding *invisible eternal things*, we shall be more and more changed into the image and likeness of them. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the*

Lord. These believing, loving sights of heavenly things will change us into the image of them.

9. By this we shall be made more and more willing and desirous to leave this World, and to go to a better. Compare this Text with the beginning of the next Chapter, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1, 2, 3. the Apostle having said, *We look not on visible temporal things, but on those things which are not seen, which are eternal*; presently adds, for we know that *when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; for in this (*House*) we groan earnestly to be clothed upon with our *House* which is from *Heaven.* And this made *Paul* desire to be dissolved that he might *be with Christ*, which was far better, or best of all; *Phil.* 3.

Certainly, such as really apprehend, and truly believe those *invisible eternal things*, and their title to them and portion in them, will be *really willing* to dye, that they may enjoy them, knowing that they lye on the other side of Death, and cannot be enjoyed, but by dying, and after Death, Death being the In-let to all that purchased, promised Glory. Now, the more we do seriously think and meditate on those glorious things, the more willing we shall be to leave all those fading, vain, and vexing Comforts, to enjoy those eternal Delights: And it is a great Mercy and sweet Priviledge to be willing to dye; and I know nothing will more effect this willingness in us.

Now, let all those Motives effectually perswade us to draw off our hearts from those *visible temporal things*, and to set our Affections *upon things above.* How long shall vain Thoughts lodge within us? how long shall this present evil World gnaw and feed upon our Spirits, consuming and wasting them,

and

and eating out our time and strength? how long *shall* the God of this World blind our Minds, and the Dust of it fill our Eyes? how long shall we misplace our Affections, and mistake our Rest? Our Rest is not here, our Heaven and Happiness is not here; Earth is going from us, and we from it, and shall we hug what we cannot hold? Shall we kiss and embrace that which is withering in our hands, and dying in our arms? Are there not infinitely-better things to be minded? Duke *de Alva* wickedly said, when one told him of an Eclipse that was then present, *I have so much to do on Earth, I have no leisure to mind Heaven.* O, that it may not be so said of any of us.

Let us call to mind what those *invisible eternal things* are aforementioned, as *God*, *Christ*, the *Holy Ghost*, the *Promises*, the *Purchased Inheritance*, the *Glory of Heaven*, &c. withal, let us mind Christ's second Coming to Judgment, the manner and end of it, 2 *Thess.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. which the Apostle often spoke and wrote of, and minded, *Tit.* 2. 13, 14. the glorious Appearing of the great *God* and our *Saviour*; the Resurrection of the Body, and the manner of it, 1 *Cor.* 15. the full Redemption and glorious Manifestation of the Sons of *God*; the happy uniting of the Souls and Bodies of the Saints after so long a Separation; and the uniting and solemn Marriage of both to Christ, the King of *Glory*; the passing of the Saints into *Heaven* with Christ in Triumph; their living for ever with *God*, seeing his Face, and knowing him as we are known: Oh, that we could mind these things, and set our Faith and Love, our Hopes, Desires, and Delights on work upon these things, what sweet Contentment, what Soul-refreshing Joy and Comfort would such thoughts yield to our Souls, even

in

in the midst of all our Troubles? No wonder we are such Strangers to the Joy of the Lord, because we are such Strangers to *God* himself, and to the great things of his Kingdom.

I shall conclude this Use with that of the Apostle, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.* Be diligent to prepare for the enjoyment of all those great and glorious things, and to secure our title to them; which Preparation consists in two things mainly, as expreſt in that Scripture,

1. In a state of Reconciliation with *God*.
2. In a spotless, blameless Conversation.

1. In a state of Reconciliation with *God*. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace*: There will be a most strict and accurate search made at the last day; all those that look for those invisible eternal good things at last, must be exceeding careful about this, to make this the Mark, Design, and Aim all their Life, and at Death, that they may be found in a reconciled state, in a state of Peace with *God*. This is the critical point, the main hinge, whereupon hangs all the safety and happiness of a Man or Woman for Eternity: Not whether rich or poor, high or low, honourable or contemptible in this World, the Differences and Distinctions will signifie nothing then; nor whether *Presbyterian* or *Independent*, &c. but whether reconciled to *God* or no. This strict search will be made by the Lord, who cannot be blinded nor deceived.

And the consideration of the issue of this search should quicken us to diligence in our Preparation, which shall be, 1*st*, on them that shall then be found not reconciled; the danger will be to their whole man,

man, Soul and Body, *Depart ye cursed*, &c. most dreadful, and most intolerable. 2*dly*, On them that are found reconciled, their Comfort will be unspeakable; the Lord Jesus will own them *all*, as the Purchase of his Blood, and will embrace them all, *Come ye blessed of my Father*, &c. and will commend them, *Well done*, &c. and will crown them with a Diadem of Eternal Glory.

Oh then, let us presently engage *all* the Powers of our Souls, in striving to be found of *God* in Peace. And if we will be found of *God* in Peace at that day, we must

1. Fall out with all Sin, and make an open breach with all Ungodliness, and *all Worldly lusts*, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. No Peace with *God*, so long as we have Peace with any Sin: We must search for our Sins of Heart and Life, heartily repent of them, declare open War against them *all*, not regarding any Iniquity in our Hearts, but hating and mortifying all. Go to *God*, to give you sound Repentance; *Acts* 5. 31. & 3. 19.

2. Fall in, and close unfeignedly with Jesus Christ, the only Peace-maker, accepting him on his Terms, taking him for Only Lord and Saviour, resigning up our whole selves unto him in *all things*, giving him the Preheminence in us, and over us, and heartily submitting to his government by his Word and Spirit. Thus by true Repentance and Faith we are to make our Peace with *God*. And this is the sum of the Gospel, *Acts* 20. 21. *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*: Repentance, in order to the obtaining of our Pardon: *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come.* *Acts* 5. 31. Christ is *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.*

Job

Job 22. 21. And by Faith in Christ we take hold of *God's* Strength; *Isa.* 27. 5. *Which is the mercy of God in Christ, this is the strength of God, to save sinners.* Lay hold then on this Strength of God, *viz.* the Mercy of God in Christ, and so shall we make Peace with *God: Rom.* 5. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* Make sure and sound work then, in Repentance and Faith; let us often try our Repentance and Faith; dally not, nor delay in this business, we are all upon the Borders of Eternity, we are all near those *invisible eternal things*.

This is the common Counsel we give every body on their Sick-beds; *You must make your peace with God*, we say, but how this may be done, few know or mind. O, let us mind those great matters: Have we unfeignedly repented from dead Works unto Life? Is all Sin hated and sought out? Are we truly converted? *Acts* 26. 18. & 3. 19. Sound Conversion, a thorow Change of Heart and Life, is the surest sign of true Repentance. Have we Faith in Jesus Christ? the Faith of *God's Elect?* Faith unfeigned, that purifieth the Heart, worketh by Love, overcometh the World, unites to Christ, and draws Life from him, to live as he lived, and walk as he walked? Let us try our Repentance by these Texts, *Jer.* 31. 19. *Joel* 2. 14. *Isa.* 55. 7. *Matt.* 3. 8. *Heb.* 6. 1. *Thorow Examination* of *Heart* and *Life*, *Clear Confession*, *Hearty Humiliation*, *Self-Abhorrency*, *Thorow Reformation*, will prove our Repentance true and sound.

Q. *How shall I know that I have truly believed?*

A. Hast thou found it an hard Work to believe, a Work altogether above thy own Power?

Hast

Hast thou seen and felt thy lost Estate by Nature?

Hast thou seen the *Excellency* of Christ, and thy absolute necessity of him? Is he most precious to thy Soul?

Hath thy Soul been drawn to Christ, made heartily *willing* to close with Christ upon his own Terms? to take him for your only Lord and Saviour? hath all this been wrought in thee by the Word? Dost thou value Faith as a Jewel? Dost thou rely on Christ, and trust him with all things, and for all things? Doth this bring Peace to thy Soul? Dost thou draw Life and Strength from Christ? Doth thy Faith in him support thee in Trouble? What Service doth it do thee in time of Trouble? It is the greatest Support the poor Saints have in all their Afflictions, as *Heb.* 11. throughout.

Our great Business lies upon making sure and clear the Truth of our Repentance and Faith, and we must go to *God* for both, for they are his special gifts: Also we must go to Christ, he is the Author and Giver of them; *Acts* 5. 31. *Heb.* 12. 1, 2. And we should be often trying our Repentance and Faith, for without these no Soul can ever attain unto Salvation; and with them no Soul shall ever miss it.

The penitent Believers are the only heirs of the Promises; *all* the great and glorious things of the other World, which the faithful *God*, who cannot lye, hath promised, and which our Blessed Jesus hath purchased with his most precious Blood, they do *all* belong to penitent Believers, and to none else. The exceeding great and precious Promises, are those sweet Breasts of Consolation, which they should lye upon, and suck continually, and by two immutable things (to wit, the Word and Oath of

God)

God) wherein it is impossible that *God* should lye, these Promises are confirmed, that the heirs of the Promises might have (not weak, but) strong Consolation, *Heb.* 6. 17.

Fourth *Use, for Lamentation.*

These things are to be lamented:

I. The great ignorance of those *invisible eternal things.* Our Lord lamented and wept over *Jerusalem* for this, *Luke* 19. 21, 22. *If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace.*

It is a lamentable thing, that People living under the *clearest Discoveries* and *brightest Displays* of those *invisible eternal things*, should yet be so grosly ignorant of them, and so unacquainted with them, as God complains of *Israel*, *Hos.* 4. 1, 6. & 8. 12. No knowledge of *God* in the Land, though it was the only Land in all the World then that had the means of Knowledge; *Hos.* 8. 12. *I have written to them the great things of my law, but they have counted them strange things.* Look over those particulars afore-mentioned, and we shall find, that there is very little true distinct knowledge of them in the Land.

Obj. *But we do know these things.*

Ans. If we do know *God*, why do we not obey him? *Tit.* 1. 16. To *profess* to *know God, and in works to deny him*, is the Character of a *Reprobate.* Why do we not trust him? *Psal.* 9. 10. *They that know his name will put their trust in him.* 1 John 2. 3, 4. & 4. 17. What likeness have most Men and Women to *God* and *Christ*? What Fruits of the Spirit do appear? *Gal.* 5. 22. but the Fruits of the Flesh are manifest. What Power, Sweetness, and

Com-

Comfort do Men find in the Word and Promises? how *little* are most affected, when they read or hear of *all* the great things purchased by Christ, and prepared in *Heaven* for Believers? What fixed, delightful Thoughts and serious Meditations are spent upon these things? Alas! alas! whose Conscience doth not accuse him? Whose Heart that hath any tenderness, doth not smite him for his neglect of this?

While I am writing this, my Conscience flies in my Face, and chargeth me with guilt: "O par-
"don me, Lord, through the Blood of Christ,
"and give me true Repentance: Let me be asha-
"med and even confounded for my woful neglect
"of minding invisible eternal things: I am con-
"vinced of my guilt, and blessed be God for that.
"O give me an heavenly heart, let in more of
"Heaven to my heart.

O shew thy self to me,
Or take me up to thee.

II. It is a Lamentable thing, that those high, glorious, invisible eternal things should be so *little* believed by us: They are little known, but less believed: They cannot but be known to us in some measure; they have been so often preach'd to us, and we have so often read of them: *Their sound hath gone out to the ends of the earth, Rom.* 10.19. *Did not* Israel *know?* Doth not *England* know? Then we must be stark deaf and blind. Some Knowledge in our heads we must needs have; but certainly here is the Root-Sin, the Spring of *all* Ungodliness, even Unbelief; whatever People profess, these things are not believed; People are not *fully* perswaded in their *Hearts* and *Souls*, of the Truth, of the Excellency, and of the Reality of those

those things, *Who hath believed our Report? Isa.* 53. 1. *and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* to make Souls believe, and to work effectual Faith in them? Surely to very few.

A very bare *historical Faith* is wanting, but much more a *cordial, practical Perswasion* of those things; for by true Faith we come to have an Interest in *all* these eternal good things, and if we had an Interest in them, we should mind them more.

Those *invisible eternal things* spoken of in the holy Scripture, signifie no more to most of us, than those Mountains of Spices, and Mines of Gold do, that are in the *Indies*, which we never hope to see or possess, and for which none of us will part with our poor Cottages: Alas! alas! it were impossible, if we did *really believe* those things above, and that they may be had by us, but that we should take more pains to get a Title to them, and having once got a Title, surely we should mind them more than we do.

Now the grand Reasons why we that profess that we know and believe those great things of the other World, yet take so *little pains* to be assured of our Right to them, are these, *viz.* our *false Faith*, our *false Hope*, and our *inordinate Love of the World*. Cou'd we get these three Thieves out of our hearts, it won'd be otherwise with us.

1. Our *False Faith*, building our Faith on the Mercy of God, and Merits of Christ in general, not considering whether those Conditions are wrought in us, to which the Mercy of God is promised, and to which the Merits of *Christ* do belong. *Isa.* 1. 16. & 55. 7. *Rom.* 8. 9. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. *Heb.* 5. 9. *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. & 16. 24. & 10. 34. By *all* which places we *shall* find, that the Mercy of God belongs to the penitent returning

ing Sinner, and that those only can *truly claim* an Interest in Christ, that submit to his Yoke, that have his Spirit, that are new Creatures, that deny themselves, and give up themselves to the Government of *Christ*.

2. Our *False Hope*; that deceived those eminent Professors in *Matth.* 7. 21. and the foolish Virgins, *Matth.* 25. and which deceives all Hypocrites and formal Christians, that build their Hopes upon outward Profession, Priviledges, the performance of religious Duties, outward Reformation, &c. not minding that express word in 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every one that hath this hope*, (that is, to see Christ in Glory, and to be made like unto him) *purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* Col. 1. 27. *Christ in you the hope of glory*: Not Christ without you, professed by you, but Christ in you, formed in you, dwelling in your Hearts by Faith, living and reigning in you by his Word and Spirit, that is the *Hope of Glory*, the true and only ground of true *Hope of Glory*.

3. *Inordinate Love of the World.* 1 John 2. 14, 15. *If we be friends of this world, we are enemies to God*: Too much love of Life, Liberty, Ease, Relations, &c. our Hearts are let out strongly after these, therefore our good God doth oftentimes strip his dearest Children of these, in love to their Souls, to take off their Affections from them, that they may place them on better things, where they are better bestowed.

III. It is Lamentable also, that those *invisible, eternal, great* and *glorious things* should be no more minded, thought upon, considered, and spoken of by Professors, that hope shortly to enjoy them: God, Christ, Glory, Heaven, are seldom in mens

Minds

Minds and Thoughts: What are moſt Peoples Morning and Evening Thoughts? *Pſal.* 49. 11. What vain Thoughts lodge in our Hearts? *Jer.* 4. 14. Oh, how little talk is there of theſe things amongſt us? Is God our Father? Is Chriſt our Head and Husband? Is the Holy Ghoſt our Counſellour and Comforter? Is the Word of God our Rule and Guide, our ſpiritual Food and Nouriſhment, our Comfort and Conſolation? Are the Promiſes our great Charter, Heaven and Glory our Inheritance? And do we indeed hope to enjoy all theſe things for ever and ever, and yet think no more, and ſpeak no more of them? Can this be ſo? Can our hopes be good and well grounded? Let us not deceive our ſelves.

IV. It is Lamentable, that theſe great things ſhould be no more laboured after. *Joh.* 6. 27. *Labour not for that meat which periſheth, but for that which endureth to eternal life.* Prov. 2. 2, 3, 4. *Iſa.* 55. 2, 3. We labour for that which is not Bread, not Bread for our Souls, and ſpend that which is better than Mony, our Spirits and Time, for that which doth not, cannot ſatisfie. Why ſhould *viſible temporal things* have ſo much of our hearts, heads, tongues, hands, time, ſtrength and all, and thoſe *inviſible eternal things* have ſo little? Is there any colour of Reaſon for it? Are not thoſe *inviſible eternal things* infinitely better than the other? Certainly it is, becauſe they are not known nor believed, nor minded, that they are no more laboured after.

How do we diſhonour *God*, and *Chriſt*, and the *Promiſes*? how do we undervalue *Chriſt's Purchaſe*, and *Eternal Life*, when we lay out our ſelves ſo much for the World, and ſo little for theſe? How

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? Heb. 2. 3.

V. It's lamentable also, that the loss of the means of the discovery of those *invisible eternal things*, should no more affect and trouble us: *Lam.* 1. 7. *Jerusalem remembred in the days of her affliction all her pleasant things, that she had in the days of old.* A Famine of the Word is the worst, *Amos* 8.

VI. And it is lamentable, that those who know, believe, desire, and labour after those things themselves, should be no forwarder and readier to commend those things to others, and should take no more pains to perswade and draw others to look after them: Oh, how few cry out to others with holy *David*, *Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul?*

VII. And no less lamentable is it, that those who claim an Interest in all those great and glorious good things, and hope to enjoy them hereafter, that those persons should no more express the power of them in their Lives; that they should no more rejoyce in them, and be no more raised in their Spirits, and gladded in their Hearts with the fore-thoughts of them; and that they should live no more comfortably upon them: It's sad, that those thus interested in God, and Christ, and Glory, and that are the Expectants of that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, should not live better lives, more exemplary, shining, profitable, joyful lives: We that look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be in *all manner of holy conversation?* It's sad also, that such should bear up with no more strength, holy courage and

and confidence, in the midst of the Troubles of this short Life, seeing they hope for such glorious things in the other World: We see how bravely the Primitive Christians carried themselves in all their Sufferings, by looking unto, minding, and thinking upon those *invisible eternal things*: Oh, could we keep them in our view, and keep our Eye on them, we should not faint nor sink under any of our Troubles. We look too much on, and mind too much those *visible temporal things*, and look too little to the *Invisible God*, to our *Blessed Jesus*, and *Eternal Glory*. Oh, that *God* would encrease and strengthen our Faith, and help us to live in the lively actings and exercise of it. By it we stand. Oh, that we could live more by Faith, and less by Sense; 2 *Cor.* 5. 7.

Fifth *Use*, *for Instruction.*

If we would set our Hearts and Minds on those *invisible eternal things*, we must

1. Be much in Prayer: Pray, oh, pray for new Hearts, old Hearts will not hold heavenly things. Pray for Saving Light and Knowledge, *Ephes.* 1. 17, 18. Pray that ye may clearly apprehend and understand those things: Pray for Faith, that you may really believe them, and may be fully perswaded of the Truth and Excellency of them. *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* Pray for Love, that your Hearts may be throughly and truly affected with them; that you may relish and savour them, and may feel, taste, and see the goodness of them; Pray for strength of Faith and Love, that you may act those and other Graces, as Hope, Joy, Desire, and Delight upon those heavenly things. Pray without ceasing; pray fervently for these things,

and

and never leave praying till you obtain. Tell God what an earthly, empty, carnal Heart you have, and how impossible it is for you your selves, to make it heavenly: Complain to the God of all Grace, who can make all Grace to abound.

2. Search the Scriptures diligently; Read the Word of God conscientiously; for there all those great and glorious things are discovered: And labour to believe what you hear and read; and to get the power and efficacy of God's Truths on your Spirits; 2 *Cor.* 4. 4, 6.

3. Be watchful against all Sin, and against the World, and the Lusts of the Flesh: Be much in mortification of your inordinate Affections: *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 5. compared. Watch against vain thoughts, and strive in God's strength to draw up your hearts to Heaven, and hold them there.

4. Seriously and often consider the great and real difference between *visible* and *invisible* things, between *temporal* and *eternal* things, uncertain and certain things, transitory and permanent things; between those things that respect the mortal Body, and those that concern the immortal Soul; between those things that are the Portion of Reprobates, and those that are the Portion of God's Elect. Oh, consider the great difference between those things which are the Effects of Common Providence, and those that are the Fruits of God's everlasting Love, and Christ's most precious Blood. Surely a due and deep consideration of the vast difference which is between these things, would help us to mind eternal things.

5. Consider what taste these *visible temporal things* will have in a dying hour; surely either none at all or a bitter one. Oh then, what will Honours, Riches, Pleasures signifie? Oh then, how much

better

better and sweeter will those *invisible eternal things* be to a poor Soul? Oh then, an Interest in God and in Christ, a Pardon, a Title to Eternal Life, Assurance of Salvation, will be things of value, And why should they not be so now?

6. Converse much with heavenly-minded Christians; but, alas! where shall we find them? Let us all bewail our horrible Earthlinesse, our Earthly Discourse, all Earth in our Thoughts, Earth in our Mouths, and yet hope to go to Heaven at last, and live in Heaven for ever; O, how unlikely! Surely, if I am not very much mistaken, I think, a great many of our Professors will be mistaken at last, and that will be dreadful, because irrecoverable. *O Lord, give thy poor Servant an heavenly Heart.*

Sixthly. *The* Last *Use is, for Comfort to those that do mind and look unto those* invisible eternal things *in good earnest.*

For your Comfort, consider,

1. This is to you an Evidence of your Interest in *all* those great and glorious things: That you do thus mind and converse with heavenly things, with God, and Christ, and Glory; it is a good sign that these are *all* your own, that you have a good Title to them. An heavenly Mind is a very good sign of one that belongs to Heaven.

2. You *shall* shortly enjoy and possess them *all*: Where Christ is, there (shortly) shall his Servants be: He will not always dwell in Heaven without you; nor will he always be absent from you; no, but he will *come again, and receive you to himself, that where he is, there you may be also, John* 14. 1, 2, 3. And where is he, but at the right hand of the Throne

Throne of his Father? and *there you shall be also: When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him also in glory*, Col. 3. 3, 4. Now you can see and think on those *invisible eternal things* but darkly and confusedly, but then you shall see clearly, yea, possess and enjoy them for ever.

3. This your minding of heavenly things will very much sweeten your present Sufferings: And this brings me to the consideration of the last thing in the scope of the Text, namely, the help or benefit those Primitive Christians had, by their looking unto those *invisible eternal things*, which was, that thereby they were supported under their present Sufferings; *Ver.* 16. *We faint not, while we look not on things that are seen, but on things that are not seen.* Hence may we observe this Doctrinal Conclusion.

Doct. *That a believing sight, and serious minding of unseen eternal things, is a singular means of sweet support to poor Christians under all their Troubles.*

This flows from the scope of the Text, *We faint not*, say they, but rather we gather strength and courage, and *our inner man is renewed day by day; while we look not at those things which are seen, but at those*, &c.

Looking off from visible temporal things doth much help to support God's People under their Troubles; but looking on upon invisible eternal things doth help more. Crucifixion of our Affections to visible temporal things is very useful, but the fixation of our Affections on invisible eternal things, is more useful to our Support and Comfort. *Psal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living,*

Ver. 14. So *Heb.* 11. 26, 27. By Faith *Moses* endured, as seeing him that is invisible: *Moses* could never have endured all those hard things, if he had looked only on those things which are seen, but he looked on the invisible God, and the unseen Jesus, and on the Promises, the Recompence of Reward; he had a fixed Eye to those great things; his mind was setled on these, and that carried him through all. So *Heb.* 10. 34. *They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves they had in Heaven a better, and a more enduring substance.* So *Heb.* 11. 9, 10, 13. they endured the condition of Strangers and Pilgrims (usually a sad and troublesome condition) because they looked for a City, an invisible eternal City: They embraced the Promises, and minded them. And to this our Lord leads us, in pronouncing those Blessings, *Mat.* 5. 10, 12. That *great* should *be their reward in Heaven.*

Reas. 1. Because the blessed tendency, the powerful efficacy, and sweet fruits of all a Christians Troubles, as to our part, much depends on this Work and Duty performed by us. Let us mind this: What is the tendency and fruit of a Christian's Troubles? See the foregoing Verse, *They work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* A blessed tendency indeed, sweet fruit!

Q. *But how are Afflictions useful and effectual to produce those sweet fruits?*

Ans. Some things are done on God's part, and some on our part: On God's part, He makes Afflictions useful, to fit us for that weight of Glory, as was shewed before, by following those Afflictions with the Blessing of his Word, and Power of his Spi-

Spirit, and so makes them useful to those happy ends, *Psal.* 94. 12. as, 1*st*, By discovering, imbittering, and cleansing them from Sin, *Deut.* 8. 2. *Gen.* 41. 21. 1 *Kin.* 17. 18. *Isa.* 59. 11, 12. 2*ly*, By drawing Souls nearer to God, *Psal.* 142. 4, 5. *Psal.* 31. 11, 12, 13, 14. 3*ly*, By crucifying their Affections to the things of this Life. 4*ly*, By making them more diligent and serious in their preparation for that state of Blessedness. Thus God blesseth Afflictions.

But all doth not lye on God's part; this Blessing is attained by us, *while we look not at those things which are seen, which are temporal; but at those things which are not seen, which are eternal.* Those Blessings of Afflictions are not received, nor those Benefits and Advantages obtained by us, while we stand looking and musing, poring and pondering *upon those things which are seen.* So long as our Hearts and Minds are still fixed upon our visible Losses and Crosses, and upon the earthly Comforts that we are deprived of; and so long as our Thoughts and Affections are still set on and glued to those visible temporal things, so long we go without those Blessings and Benefits: But we must look off those things, and look up, and mind and meditate on those invisible eternal things; we must set Faith and Love, and Hope on work, in viewing and reviewing, in considering and contemplating, in apprehending and applying that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Now, while we do so, we are in the right and ready way to obtain the rich Blessings of all our Afflictions, and so we receive Comfort and Support under them all.

It is the plentiful Harveſt hoped for, and believed, that ſweetens the ſtormy Seed-time. It's a dangerous miſtake, to expect too much from the Creature, and too much comfort here in this World, for here is not our Reſt. All men would have Peace, Comfort, and Happineſs, but they would have it from the Creature, rather than from God. *Pſal.* 4. 6. Believers themſelves, that would have their Comforts from *God*, yet would have them here alſo, and would not ſtay for them till hereafter, ſaying with the Diſciples upon the Mount, *It is good to be here*; whereas here in this World we are to have but ſips, crumbs, drops, glances, glimpſes; at moſt, but ſome Firſt-fruits of *Canaan*; that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* is reſerved for the other World. The Inheritance is reſerved in Heaven for us; 1 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. and we muſt wait, for our Harveſt is not here; we are not come home. It doth not yet appear what we *ſhall* be, the quiet and peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs come not till afterwards; the great Reward, the full Reward, is in Heaven, not here.

2d *Reaſon* is, Becauſe (as I think) the Work of Saving Faith (by which mainly we are ſupported) doth not conſiſt only in looking backward on the Croſs of Chriſt, and his payment of our Ranſom by his precious Blood; but alſo in looking forward on the Crown of Chriſt, and the Glory he hath purchaſed for us. *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen.* Saving Faith is, not only to believe what our dear Lord hath already done on Earth for us, in the great work of Redemption; but alſo unfeignedly and firmly to believe thoſe things which we

we never ſaw nor did ever Man ſee, and to hope and look for them ſo really, as to let go *all* worldly Hopes and Happineſs, rather than hazard the loſs of thoſe inviſible things. This is an eminent part of Faith, whereby the Juſt do live; 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

It is upon our clear Apprehenſions and firm Expectations of that unſeen and eternal Felicity, in the full enjoyment of the Bleſſed God, that both our Peace and Safety doth depend.

We can have no ſolid Peace, while we look for much Comfort and Content from the Creature, in this our preſent Pilgrimage and Priſon; for in doing ſo, we looking for more in the Creature than is in it, we loſe our Comforts, and then complain for want of them; for our looking for ſo much from them, and looking ſo much on them, provokes God to take them from us; and when they are gone, we are troubled.

If eternal Joys, and everlaſting Conſolations were more in our Minds, if the *Joy of our Lord*, *Matt.* 25. 21. were more in our Thoughts and Affections, ſurely ſpiritual Joy would more at preſent abound in our Hearts: *Rom.* 15. 13. *The God of conſolation would fill us with joy and peace in believing*: Believing Apprehenſions of thoſe inviſible eternal Joys, would breed in us ſome refreſhing Joys for the preſent. So 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. No wonder we are ſo comfortleſs, and walk ſo ſadly, while thoſe things which ſhould raiſe us and comfort us, are ſo little in our Minds and Thoughts, and we ſuch Strangers above. We muſt needs faint when we lay by our Cordials, and make no uſe of them, and when we lay by our Supports, and mind them not. Temporal things muſt needs affect us and afflict us,

when eternal things are out of sight, and out of mind.

Mark this: When Christians do not only let fall their expectations and hopes of the unseen promised Glory, and let the thoughts of them decay and dye away in them; but also heighten their hopes and expectations from the Creature, and earnestly and eagerly pursue the same; then do they most certainly prepare for their own Disquiets, Fears and Troubles, and with both Hands draw Calamity on themselves, because *they forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water.* All Creature-comforts are at best but Cisterns, and when too much loved, but broken Cisterns, in which are no Waters of true Consolation to be found; *Jerem.* 2. 13. To seek Content here, in any thing out of God, and beneath him, is to seek the Living among the Dead: The Work of Faith is, to look upwards, to look within the Veil, to look to Jesus, *Mic.* 7. 7.

The right and ready way to present Peace is, looking stedfastly (not to present things, but) to that future Rest and Happiness, to the full enjoyment of God in Heaven. Thus our Lord takes off his Disciples from their Heart-trouble, *John* 14. 1, 2. of which Text I have written a Discourse at large.

Let us consider how this *looking unto those eternal things* is expressed: 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. it is, loving the *appearance* of Christ: *Tit.* 2. 13. *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. 1 *Cor.* 1. 7. 2 *Cor.* 5. 2, 3. *Rom.* 8. 23. *waiting, hoping, hastening unto, groaning after* that Glory.

Who-

Whoever meets with a distressed, disconsolate, complaining Christian, you shall find, that one or both of these things is manifest in him; either he hath low Expectations from God hereafter, or he hath high Expectations from the Creature here; either he looks too much on things visible and temporal, or too little on things invisible and eternal; and indeed, he that doth the one doth the other; for, the too much minding *visible temporal things*, hinders the true minding of *invisible eternal things*.

If we examine matters aright in our own Souls, we shall find, that this is the main thing that begets in us, and keeps us under, so many Troubles and Disquiets; either, that we do not, or will not seriously and believingly engage our Hearts and Minds in the meditation, consideration, and application of *all* those great and glorious things, which God hath promised, and which Christ hath purchased; or else we *will* needs mind and expect what God hath not promised, nor Christ purchased, a total freedom from Troubles, Sicknesses, Losses, &c. God hath no where promised, nor hath Christ purchased it: and then we complain, when we miss of our groundless Expectations.

Either we are still poring and thinking on our Creature-comforts and Enjoyments, and looking for much from them and in them, much comfort, help, sweetness, satisfaction, respect, kindness, from them; or else we are grieving and mourning for the loss and want of them; all which thoughts do but sowre, imbitter, wound and weaken our Spirits; or else we do but too seldom think of the infinite Goodness, Love, Mercy, Tenderness, All-sufficiency of God and Christ, and of the Glory of Heaven; which Thoughts would sweeten, alleviate, and mi-

tigate our Sorrows, and help much to support our Spirits under *all* our Afflictions.

We are grieved and troubled for Losses and Crosses, for loss of Relations, for Sickness and Pains, Disappointments, Unkindnesses of Friends, Disesteem in the World, *&c.* Let us consider, whether God hath promised, or Christ purchased any Freedom from those: Have any of the Saints been freed from those? And, why should we expect to be free? But if we make Promises to our selves, and then our own Promises deceive us, whom can we blame for that?

Nay, do we not, as it were, necessitate God hereby, to imbitter *all* our Earthly Comforts to us, and to make every Creature a Scorpion to us, because we will make them our *Gods?* We have less Comfort in them than we might have, because we would have more in them than we should: We might have more kindness from Friends, more sweetness in our Relations, *&c.* if we looked for less.

Scarce any Comfort we have, but one time or other becomes a Scourge to us, because we foolishly made it an Idol to us. *Isa.* 2. 22. *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted? Jer.* 17. 5, 6, 7. We can never expect so little from the Creature, but we shall be sure to find less than we looked for: But such is the Goodness of God to his People, that we can never expect so much from him, but we shall be sure to find more.

The

The Application.

First, *For Information.*

1. If the ſerious minding of, and believing looking unto inviſible eternal things, will much ſupport Chriſtians under the Troubles of this Life, it follows then, that there is a great neceſſity that Chriſtians ſhould have a diſtinct ſaving knowledg of inviſible eternal things, for without ſuch a knowledge of them, they cannot mind them, nor ſet their Hearts upon them. *John* 17. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent.* *Col.* 2. 2, 3. We know thoſe things but confuſedly, and therefore we mind them but confuſedly. This Saving Knowledge is a New Covenant-Mercy: God promiſeth that his People *ſhall be all taught* of him, and that *they ſhall all know the Lord*; *Jer.* 31. 33, 34. *John* 6. 45. *Eph.* 4. 21. Our Duty is then, to lay hold on God's Covenant, and humbly to beſeech him to teach us by his Spirit, and to enlighten our Underſtandings; as *Paul* prays, *Eph.* 1. 17, 18.

2. Hence appears the Neceſſity of Faith, and full perſwaſion of the verity, reality, and excellency of thoſe *inviſible eternal things.* It is a full perſwaſion of a Better Good than the Creature, and of a Better Countrey, of a Better Subſtance, of a Better Place than this World is, and of Better Company, Better Friends than can be enjoyed here, that will make us ſet our Thoughts on work upon them, and that will ſupport under the loſs of thoſe worſe things.

While we have those better things in our Eye, we shall not be much troubled about the worse; the better will *swallow* up the worse, if we firmly and heartily believe them, and have good ground to hope, through Grace, that we have Title to them; as *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. The belief of a better Resurrection, and of a better Life than this, *will* support us under the Troubles of this: *Heb.* 11. 35.

3. Then there is also a necessity lies on us of having an Interest in those invisible eternal good things; in God, in Christ, in the Promises, and in the Purchased Inheritance. An absolute necessity lies on us all, of getting an interest in Jesus Christ, Real Union with him, for only hereby we come to have an Interest in *all* those eternal Blessings: If Christ be ours, *All* is ours; not else. *1 Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

Oh, this, this is the one thing necessary, That we make sure our Interest in God, and in his Covenant by Jesus Christ: This, and this alone, will *ballance all our Losses.* Take special notice of those two Texts, *1 Sam.* 30. 6. *2 Sam.* 23. 5.

Let us try our Interest in Christ by those few Scriptures, *Rom.* 8. 1, 9. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new Creature; all old things are past away; behold, all things are become new.* Gal. 5. 24. *They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.* Gal. 2. 20. *Christ liveth in me.*

4. Hence we may know the true cause and ground of Discouragement and Despondency under our Troubles, to wit, our want of Faith in,

and

and our not minding of eternal invisible things. They that believe not the Crown, can never comfortably bear the Cross; The way to forget our Misery, is seriously and believingly to remember and consider our Felicity. *Rom.* 8. 17. *The sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us.*

Our Burdens would not be so heavy as they are, if our Hearts were more heavenly than they are: If we could get more above, and converse more with God, our Troubles would not be so troublesome as they are. *Nil sentit in Nervo, cum anima sit in Cælo.* Oh, let us pray for more acquaintance with God, and thereby good, all good, shall come unto us. Let us cry out with the Divine Poet,

O shew thy self to me,
Or take me up to thee.

Converse with God and Christ will sweeten every bitter Cup, and lighten every heavy Burden.

5. Hence also we may inferr the Necessity of Patience under all our Afflictions, which are designed to prepare us for Glory, and that no otherwise, than as we do by Faith and Patience live in the expectation of that Glory. *Rom.* 2. 7. *To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life:* *Heb.* 10. 36. Unless we patiently bear our Troubles, they are not like to produce those blessed effects; it is only through Faith and Patience that we inherit the Promises.

6. The Misery of all Unbelievers then is very great, whatever they possess in this World, for they must needs meet with Troubles also in this Life, and must meet with the King of Terrors at last;

laſt: And what poſſibly can ſupport them, having no intereſt in God and Chriſt, and no good grounds of hope, that they ſhall enjoy thoſe inviſible eternal good things hereafter? Part they muſt with all viſible temporal good things, and that for ever, and cannot look on God, and Glory, and Heaven as theirs, becauſe not regenerated, not united to Chriſt, not effectually called: ſurely their caſe is moſt ſad, for then alſo all their vain hopes and groundleſs confidences *ſhall* periſh.

7. The miſchief of Earthly-mindedneſs alſo appears hence: Inordinate minding earthly things, whether Friends or Foes, Eaſe or Pain, Loſs or Gain, &c. this very much hinders our Comfort and Support: Oh, pray againſt it, watch againſt it.

Now to take us off from this inordinate minding of theſe Earthly things, let us take theſe Helps.

1. Let us urge and preſs the expreſs Command of *God* upon our Hearts, *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *Set your affections upon things above, and not upon things below.* Let this ſway with us: It is as much our Duty as any other, and there is as much Divine Authority in this Command as in any other, and as much of the Power of Religion and Truth of Grace lies in the Practice of this, as of any other Duty; and by the conſciencious performance of this Duty, we do as much evidence the ſincerity of our Love and Obedience, as by any other.

2. If we be true Chriſtians, we are of an high, noble, heavenly extraction and original, begotten and born of *God*; *Jam.* 1. 17, 18. *John* 3. 3, 5. born from above, Heaven-born, therefore we ſhould mind heavenly things. As is the heavenly, ſuch are they that are heavenly.

3. If

3. If we be true Chriſtians, we have an inviſible eternal Life in us; Chriſt is our Life, and our Life is hid with Chriſt in God; *Col.* 3. 3, 4. We have inviſible eternal Principles of Life in us, Chriſt formed in our Hearts; *Phil.* 4. 19. The incorruptible Seed of God in us; the Spirit of Jeſus in us, the Divine Nature in us; all which diſpoſe and encline us to look upwards, and to mind inviſible and eternal things.

4. Your Hopes are grounded and fixed on inviſible eternal things, 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *If our hope were only in this life, we ſhould be of all men moſt miſerable.* Our hopes are not here, we hope for what we ſee not; *Rom.* 5. 2. 2 *Pet.* 1. 13. 1 *John* 3. 3. It is inviſible glory, the glory that is to be revealed at the Coming of Chriſt, *That when Chriſt ſhall appear, you may appear with him in glory, and may ſee him as he is, and may be like him.* You hope for infinitely better things than this World can afford; *Tit.* 2. 13, 14. *Phil.* 3. 21. You look for the Coming of *Jeſus in glory, who ſhall make your vile bodies like unto his glorious body*; and then you that look for ſuch things in Heaven, ſurely you ſhould have your Converſations in Heaven.

5. Your Actings and Workings here in this life, are for inviſible ends and purpoſes, not to be ſeen of Men, not to have your Reward here, but you ſeek Honour, and Glory, and Immortality, and Eternal Life; *Rom.* 2. 7, 8. Your ſowing here is to reap Life everlaſting; *Gal.* 6. 8. It is an inviſible, incorruptible Crown, an everlaſting Kingdom, an Heavenly Inheritance, that you are ſeeking: 1 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. You *labour not for that meat which periſheth, but for that which endureth to everlaſting life*: *John* 6. 27. You are ſeeking *a City which*

which hath foundations, and travelling home to *your Father's House*; therefore needs must your *thoughts and affections be set upon things above.*

6. Let us consider, that all our best Friends and deareſt Relations are above, inviſible and unſeen to us here below. There is our Heavenly Father, there our dear Redeemer, ſitting at his right hand; there are all our pious Friends and dear Relations that dyed in Chriſt; there they are together praiſing and enjoying God.

7. If you be true Chriſtians, you have enlightned Minds, Eyes of Faith, Spiritual Underſtandings given you, to diſcern and apprehend thoſe inviſible eternal things; 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. you are ſpiritual perſons.

8. You eſteem, value, and love thoſe heavenly things moſt and beſt, if you be true Chriſtians; your Hearts are in Heaven, for there is your Treaſure; 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.

9. You have inviſible Supports, Influences, and Experiences, a Well of Living Water ſpringing up in you, unto eternal life, *John* 4. 14. which no others but you have; and from thoſe ſpiritual Principles, which the Spirit of Chriſt plants in his People, good thoughts and heavenly Meditations are continually bred and fed.

10. You are in Heaven already, in Chriſt your Head; *Epheſ*, 2. 6. *Riſen with Chriſt*: And this Heavenly-mindedneſs the Apoſtle makes the true evidence of our being *riſen with Chriſt*; *Col.* 3. 1, 2. *If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things which are above: Set your affections on things above*: And it is the very diſtinguiſhing Character of one in Chriſt: *Rom.* 8. 1. *They that are in Chriſt, walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.*

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Second *Use, by way of Exhortation to all Christians.*

Would you have sweet Support under all your Discouragements and sinking Troubles, then stedfastly and fixedly look upon *invisible eternal things*: Labour to live in the believing views and prospects of, and in a serious, hearty minding, and meditating upon *invisible eternal things*.

Oh, that we could draw off our Thoughts and Affections from *visible temporal things*, and that we could set them upon things above: Oh, what Peace and Sweetness should we find in our Spirits?

Q. *But how shall we be able to do this?*

A. I. By looking to *God* in all our Mercies.
II. By resigning up our Wills to *God* in all our Miseries.
III. By aiming at Communion with *God*, and Conformity to him in all our Actions.

I. Let us look to *God* in all our Mercies. He is the God of our Lives, and of all the Comforts of Life: The power, vertue, and comfort of all created good, comes from the Created good, even GOD alone, for *in him we live, and move, and have our being*. This Health, Ease, Liberty, Relations, Rest, Sleep, that we have, and all those comfortable Accommodations that we enjoy, are from the Lord. It was truly said of one, That *many love the Creature, in opposition to God; Most* love it in competition with him, and almost *All* love the Creature in a way of separation from him. But more particularly let us labour,

1st, To

1ſt, To look unto, and acknowledge with Heart and Tongue, that our Heavenly Father in Chriſt is the Author and Giver of all the Mercies we enjoy. When we have Health, Eaſe, Liberty, Reſt, or any other Mercy, we ſhould look to him from whom they come, and to him through whom they come; we ſhould eye the hand of a Father, the heart and love of a Father, and conſider alſo, that all theſe Mercies come to us through the Blood of a Redeemer; this will make every morſel, every drop and crumb to be ſweet and pleaſant to us. A Dinner of green Herbs, Barley-bread, and cold Water, with the Love of God, will be ſweet.

Q. *But when ſhall we know, that we have theſe from the Love of God, and with the Love of God?*

Anſ. Then we may conclude, theſe outward Mercies come from the Love of God to us, when we are truly thankful for the leaſt Mercy we receive, and are ſtirred up to love God more, and to be more careful to ſerve, pleaſe, and truſt God the more.

Let us look thorough our viſible Comforts, to the inviſible giver of them, and to that eternal Love from whence they come; 1 *Chron.* 29. 12, 13, 16. It is our great evil, that we love the gifts of God for themſelves, and not for the giver of them: if we could ſee and taſte Divine love and goodneſs in our Relations, Health, Eſtate, &c. Oh, how ſweet would they be unto us? But this is our Folly and Fault, we overlook and forget God, and look no further than our viſible, ſenſible, temporal Comforts; even when we ſpeak of God with our Mouths, our Hearts are but too far from him: Our Hearts hang looſe from him, and

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lye at too great a distance from him; our Hearts are not engaged with Love, and Desire, and Delight in him, nor enlarged after him, and so we miss the Comfort and Sweetness which we might find in him.

To delight in the God of Mercy more than in the Mercies of God, is a true Christian frame, and an high pitch of Grace, and a special way of enjoying sweet Communion with God; a thing wholly strange to most, and experienced but by few.

Q. *But how shall I know when I do this?*

Ans. 1. By real, practical, hearty acknowledgment and owning *God's* Propriety in all our Mercies. These Relations, Friends, this Health, Ease, Liberty, Safety, &c. these are all the Lords; as *Jacob* said, *Gen.* 33. 5. *These are the things that the Lord hath graciously given me.* We should always look on God as the proper owner of us and them; and all that we have, are but lent to us, and we are but Tenants at his will.

2. By labouring to draw up our Hearts and Loves to *God*, by those Mercies we receive from *God*, to make them as Cords and Bands of Love, to draw our Hearts nearer to God, and to bind our Hearts faster and closer to God by them; to make those Mercies as steps, to raise up our Souls higher towards God, in all the ways of obedience and holy confidence, we should pant and pray thus: "Oh, "that this Creature-comfort may draw my Heart "nearer to God, and not lye as an Idol between "my Heart and God; oh, that this temporal "Blessing may raise my Heart some degrees "higher towards God; oh, that it may help me to "ad-

" advance God more: Oh that it may not divide
" my Heart from God, nor make me forgetful
" of him, nor hinder me in my Duty to him:
" but, oh that every Mercy I receive from God
" may endear God to me, and engage my Heart
" more to him. Such pantings and breathings of
Soul should be in us, then we shall enjoy God
in our Mercies, and then they will be sweet unto
us.

3. By labouring to use and improve all our Mercies for God; our Health, Ease, Liberty, Estate and all for God; to lay *all* out for his Service. If we have any Talent, let it be improved for God; if any Candle of Comfort lighted in our Habitation, let it burn for God; if any Ease after Pain, any Strength after Weakness, lay it out for God. Let us be thinking and studying what use and service we can put our Mercies to for God. Let us spend Time, Health, Strength, and all for God.

4. By labouring to be *willing* to part with *all* our outward Mercies when God calls for them.

As we should desire and wish for no Comfort otherwise, than as we may have it with the love of God, and as it may help us, and not hinder us in our way to God; so likewise, we should not desire the continuance of any outward Comfort, any longer than with the Love of God; and when he is pleased to call for them, *willingly* to surrender them to him: This is not to love any thing above God, nor in competition with him, nor in separation from him. 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *For he that loveth any thing in the world otherwise, the love of the Father is not in him.* And in so doing we evidence, that we love the God of Mercies more than the Mercies of God: And this way we may enjoy and maintain much sweet communion with God here in this

this Life; namely, by our hearty acknowledgment of God our Father in Christ, to be the Author of *all* our Mercies; looking to his Love in them; owning his Propriety in them all; making them as Cords of Love, to draw up our Hearts to God; using them for God, and willing to part with them at his call. This is to look to God in all our Mercies.

Secondly, Let us labour to look unto, and live upon God, in every Creature-comfort that we enjoy. Not only look unto God in our Mercies, as was said before in the other particular, but let us labour to ascend higher; and that is, let us labour and learn to live upon God and his Love in those Mercies.

Let this be minded by us: That it is not the Creature, but God in the Creature, that we must love and live upon. The Creature should not content us, without some sense of God's Love in it. If we have Health, Wealth, Liberty, Friends, we should put this Question to our selves; Do we enjoy God's Love with these? A great Question, yet seldom ask'd. It is surely the Love of God in a Mercy, that doth sanctifie and sweeten the Mercy to us; as is evident in that famous Instance of *Hezekiah*, *Isa.* 38. 17. *Thou hast in love to my soul delivered me from the pit of corruption.* Then Deliverance is sweet, when it comes from God's Love to our Souls.

Q. *But how may we know that?*

A. As *Hezekiah* did; *For*, saith he, *thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* When Pardon of Sin comes with a Mercy, 'tis a Mercy indeed, a double Mercy. Note, When a Soul-mercy comes with a Bodi-

Bodily Mercy, a Soul-mercy, with Eaſe, Recovery, &c. then that outward Mercy comes from the Love of God indeed. And thus many times our Lord Jeſus diſtributed his Mercies in the days of his Fleſh upon the Earth, healing Souls and Bodies together, forgiving their Sins, and curing their Diſeaſes all at once.

Q. But how ſhall we know that our Sins are forgiven as well as our Trouble removed?

Anſ. 1. When the Soul is ſtirred up to ſuitable praiſing of *God*, as in *Hezekiah*, ſo in *David*, *Pſal.* 103. 1, 2, 3. the ſenſe of *God*'s Mercies to them enlarged their Hearts with Thankfulneſs.

2. We may know that our Sins are forgiven us if thoſe Conditions are wrought in us, unto which forgiveneſs of Sins is promiſed, and thoſe are chiefly Repentance and Faith: *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord.* Acts 10. 43. *To him* (namely, to Jeſus) *do all the Prophets witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.* Now, if after Mercies *God* gives us Hearts to repent and believe, we may certainly conclude that thoſe Mercies come to us from the love of *God*.

We follow hard in our Prayers, and Deſires, and Endeavours after earthly Mercies, when we want them; whereas our Souls ſhould follow hard after *God* in them: *Pſal.* 63. 8. & 31. 23. In every Ordinance, Priviledge, Duty, Providence, in every Enjoyment, it is the Love of God in it, that our Souls ſhould thirſt after; as *David* did, *Pſal.* 63. 1, 2, 3, *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God:*

So

so *Psal.* 84. 1. *Thee, thee, Lord, my soul longeth for.* He longed for God's Ordinances too, but chiefly, for God in them. So should we cry, "Health, and Ease, and Liberty, and Deliverance with thy self, Lord, and with thy Love: Peace and Plenty with thy Love, Lord, not without it. Better be without these Mercies than without the Love of God in them: *Jude* 21. *Keep your selves in the love of God: Gal.* 2. 20. *Psal.* 62. 10. *If riches* (Friends, Ease, &c.) *encrease, set not your hearts on them,* but on God in them.

To look through, and beyond, and above a Mercy, unto the God of that Mercy, is a Mercy in that Mercy, and a choice one too; for none but *God's Chosen ones* can do it: And so to do, argues much Grace and much Communion with God. *Col.* 3. 1, 2. Let us look up, look up to *God* in all our Mercies: Stay not on the Mercy, be not content with the outward Mercy, for that is but the Shell, but look up to God, and long to see and taste his Love in it, for that is the Kernel, his Love in Christ; feed on that by Faith, Love, Meditation.

O, let us labour to have God in all our Thoughts; for, to look to, love, and live upon Creature-comforts meerly, barely, only, is but to live upon Husks, Ashes, Wind and Vanity; these are no Bread for the Soul; *Isa.* 55. 2. *Psal.* 143. 6. *I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land.*

When we taste and see the earthly Comforts we have, if we can also taste and see the Love of God in them, we enjoy a double sweetness, an outward and an inward, a visible and an invisible sweetness: Oh, what sweetness then may we taste? for both Faith and Sense are fed at once. And we

may

may further know, that any Mercy comes to us in Love, when our Souls are the better for that Mercy, more endeared to God, and more enlarged after God.

3. We must labour to use and enjoy *all* our Mercies for God, for his Honour and Service, as was hinted before. This is God's end in giving them, and it should be ours in using them. 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* This great End should always be minded by us.

We should judge *all* that good that leads us nearer to God, and all that evil that draws us farther from him: *Prov.* 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himself.* We have lost most of our Comforts for want of this, to wit, our not enjoying them in *God*, and for *God*, and *God* in them: We feed on them, but not on *God* in them; and this provokes God to remove them, and to take away our best outward Mercies from us; even his Gospel, for our not using it, and not improving it for God, and for contenting our selves barely with it, without *God* in it: Bare Ordinances, bare Duties, without God in them, are but dry Breasts, without Milk, which Souls may lye upon all their days, and starve and perish notwithstanding, if they meet not God in them.

But now, if we thus eye and look unto *God*, and seriously mind the invisible eternal *God*, we shall hereby be sweetly supported under all our Troubles. For,

1*st*, This will take out the gall and wormwood of our Troubles, which is our inordinate love of the Creature; for there is no immoderate Sorrow for the loss of any thing, but of that which was inordinately loved: So that if *God* had had our

Hearts

Hearts and Affections, when we had our Creature-Comforts, he will have them much more when they are removed; for God remains the same still, every way as full, and as All-sufficient to supply and support us: So that if we had lived upon *God the Fountain* when we had the *Cisterns*, we shall live more immediately upon him when the *Cisterns* are broken, and shall then have our Comforts more pure, and more refreshing.

And this is not all; but if we be truly gracious, it will grieve us to the very Heart, when our earthly Comforts are gone, that we set our Hearts so much upon them, that we minded and loved them so much, and lived so much upon them, and that we lived so little upon God in them, and enjoyed so little of God and his Love in them; and this will be the Sting and Burthen of our Souls then. But now, to live on God and his Love in our Enjoyments, will prevent this *Trouble of Troubles*, and support us under all our *Troubles*, because our God, and his Love, which we lived upon before, remain still. God is everlasting, and his Love unchangable. The Foundation remains; the Spring of all our Mercies remains. But, woe and alas! what Strangers are we to this living upon God, and his Love in Christ? *David* lived entirely upon God, *Psal.* 73. 24, 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

2*dly*, By this we may begin our *Heaven upon Earth* out of *Heaven*, even in the Hell of the Troubles and Miseries of this World; for this is the very *Happiness of Heaven*, to be continually with God, and to *live* upon God, *that God may be all in all*,

all, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. This is Heavens Happineſs, to live upon that infinite Fountain of goodneſs, and to live with God. And ſo far as we can thus live upon God by Faith, Love, Meditation, Holy Confidence and Dependance, Holy Reſignation of our ſelves and all our concerns to him, ſo far we are entred into Heaven, and Heaven is entred into us already: *The kingdom of Heaven is within you*, ſaid our Lord. And, what ſupport will this be to us in all our Afflictions!

3*dly*, This is the way to loſe nothing of all our Earthly Comforts; for, what we loſe in the Creature, we ſhall find in the Creator. If we enjoyed God in the Creature, in Relations, Friends, Eſtate, Liberty, Health, &c. we may enjoy him as well when theſe Creature-comforts are gone, and it may be better than before, for the Fountain it ſelf is purer than the Streams.

All the little good, the ſmall comfort, the ſlender and ſhort ſatisfaction, the little mixed ſweetneſs, that we have in or from any Creature, comes not from the Creature it ſelf, diſtinct from God, for then all that enjoy the Creature would have that Comfort and Content, the *bad* as well as the *good*; which we know is not ſo; for many have had large *Portions* of the beſt of the Creatures, that have had no comfort or contentment in them: *Solomon* himſelf is a Witneſs.

But that very little Comfort or Content that any one hath in the Creature, it is diſtilled and derived to him through the Creature from God, and from him alone. If God put ſweetneſs into any Creature-comfort, and bleſs it to us, it ſhall be ſweet to us: If He convey any goodneſs or content to us through any Creature-chanel, we ſhall have it, not elſe: But if he put bitterneſs into any Creature-comfort, and

and with-hold his Blessing, it will yield us no content at all.

This is a most experienc'd Truth, That it is *God*'s Love, his Blessing in a Mercy, that is *the Mercy*; and it is that only which brings any Comfort or Content to us that have it.

What Content had *Ahab* in his Kingdom, or *Haman* in his Honour? Surely none at all. *Prov.* 10. 22. *The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.* The *Blessing of the Lord maketh* the Poor in this World *rich*, and with this Blessing *comes no Sorrow*, as there doth with all other Blessings. This is the Blessing that goes with *The Blessing*, the inward Blessing that goes with the outward Blessing, whether little or much, the love of *God* is in it to his People; and that maketh rich, that contents the Soul, and yields sweetness to it; and this Contentment is the Blessing, without which *Godliness* it self is not *Gain*. Now, when the outward Blessing is gone, the Creature-blessing gone, the inward Blessing may be continued; the Love of *God*, and inward Contentment may be continued; when the Cabinet is worn out, the Jewel may be as good as ever: And if this continue with us, namely, the Blessing which is the Love of God, if that remain towards us, when the outward Blessing is taken away, we have no cause of Disquietment. But this remains always to the true Christian; for it is *God*'s Covenant, which cannot be broken. *Psal.* 89. 34, 35. *My loving-kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: My covenant will I not break*, &c.

Oh, that we could look more at the invisible eternal Blessing, the sure Mercies of *David*, in *all* our outward Blessings, which remains when all the

visible temporal things are gone. Yea, further, this invisible everlasting Blessing doth not only remain with us, when all other Blessings are gone, but (which is wonderful) then, even then, our everlasting Father doth usually communicate and manifest more of his Love (which is the Blessing indeed) to the Souls of his People, than when they had the enjoyment of their outward Blessings. When had *Ezekiel* and *John* such glorious Visions of *God*, but in Captivity and Exile? When *God* brings his People into the Wilderness, then he *speaks comfortably unto them*, then he speaks to their Hearts, *Hos.* 2. 14. as in the Wilderness, in the absence of Creature-comforts, the Spouse leans on her Beloved, *Cant.* 8. 5. fixeth her Loves and Desires most intimately and heartily upon him; so, even then, her Beloved manifests most of his tender love to her; and when the World frowns, he smiles upon her.

So that this *looking up to God in all our Enjoyments*, living upon Him, and enjoying all in him, and for him, will wonderfully support us under all our Trouble, because by this means we shall lose nothing, but what we lose in the Stream, we shall find in the Fountain; what we want in the Creature, we shall find in God; yea, and in all our losses for Christ and his Truths, we are assured to have an hundred fold; *Matth.* 19. 29.

So much for the first Counsel, *Look to God in all our Enjoyments.*

II. The second Counsel: *Resign up your wills entirely to the will of God in all your Afflictions.* It is an Argument of an excellent Spirit, when all Self-respects are drowned in the Will of God, and there is

is nothing lost therein, for our best safety is in the Will of God; our Happiness is more in God than in our selves, and His Will is infinitely better than ours.

We may be sure of this, that a man shall never have setled Peace and Comfort, until he have cordially committed and resigned up all his Will and Way, all his Concerns, and Interests, and Ends to the holy Will of God. *Psal.* 37. 5, 7. *Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* Prov. 16. 3. *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

It is the difference of Wills, Ends, and Interests that begets all the Stirs and Troubles in the Hearts of Men. GOD will have his Will, and Man will have his: It is the communion of Wills, Hearts, Interests, and Ends, that is that *fellowship* that a Creature hath with its Creator.

It is the Interest and Honour, the Dignity and Duty, the Comfort and Quiet, the Heaven and Happiness of a Rational Creature to be what God will have him be, to do what God will have him do, to want what God will have him want, and to suffer what God will have him suffer; to be *wholly* at the dispose of God, as our Lord was; *Not my will, but thine be done.*

This is true Christianity indeed, true *Self-denial*, *Matt.* 16. 24. To be no more our own, nor at our own dispose, but to be entirely at the Will of God, is the way to true Comfort: *Psal.* 142. 5. *Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.*

Now, if we would thus look unto the invisible God, and resign up our wills to his will in all things, in order to our support and comfort in all our Afflictions, we must *carefully* observe these things:

1*st*, We must really look unto, and heartily own God's absolute Dominion over, and his Propriety in *all* things: He is the Lord and Owner of all his Works; *Job* 9. 12. *He taketh away, who can hinder him? who durst say to him, What doest thou?* Isa. 45. 9. He is the Potter, we are the Clay; He is the Creator of all things, and therefore the true, only, and rightful Owner of all things: *Ezek.* 18. 4. *All souls are mine*, saith God; and all Creatures are his. *Hos.* 2. 9. And we are none of our own, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. Whether as Creatures or Christians, our Souls, Bodies, Goods, *all* are God's, upon *all* accounts: If we did not look on those earthly Comforts too much as our own, we should not grieve too much for the loss of them.

Now, we own God's Dominion and Propriety in all things, when we *thankfully* receive any Creature-comfort from him; and silently submit to his disposé of them. *Psal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb*, saith *David*; and quietly surrender them up to God when he calls for them; as *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18.

2*ly*, We must really and heartily look unto and own God's Righteousness in all his Dispensations towards us, though never so hard, bitter, and pinching to the Flesh, yet God is righteous in all. *By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation.* Dan. 9. 14. *Righteous art thou, O Lord.* Psal. 145. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

Now

Now we own God's Righteouſneſs in all our Afflictions, when we diligently enquire to find out the *why* and the *wherefore* of all God's dealings with us: We ſhould reaſon thus; The righteous God afflicts me; then certainly I muſt enquire after the Cauſe, and the End: *Lam.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch our hearts, and try our ways.* *God* is righteous, we have deſerved this Affliction. Hereupon we muſt ſearch for our Sins, confeſs them, hate them, turn from them; and then this Conſideration ſetleth and ſatisfieth our Minds under God's correcting Hand: It is the righteous God that ſmites.

3*ly*, We muſt look unto and own the Faithfulneſs of God in his Chaſtiſements of us: When He blaſts our Earthly Hopes, kills our Creature-comforts, takes away our dear Relations, deprives us of Health, Eaſe, Liberty, Name, Eſtate; yet He is faithful; *Pſal.* 119. 75. *In faithfulneſs thou haſt afflicted me.* *God* hath put chaſtiſement for Sin into his Covenant, *Pſal.* 89. 31, 33. and hath promiſed to with-hold no good thing from his People, *Pſal.* 84. 11. Now *God* ſees and knows that Chaſtiſements are good for his People, and ſhall work for their good, therefore in very faithfulneſs he doth correct them, to perform his Promiſe, and fulfil his Covenant. Oh, that we could ſeriouſly look to this Faithfulneſs of God, and believe, that while He is afflicting and chaſtiſing us, He is but making good his faithful Promiſes to us, it would mightily ſupport and uphold us: But this is our Unhappineſs, that in Affliction we are apt to judge the quite contrary, and to think rather that God is executing his Threatning upon us, and that breeds Trouble to us. Little do we think,

that when God ſtrips us of this or that outward Mercy, and lays his correcting Hand upon us, that now He is in all theſe Afflictions but performing his Promiſes to us, that He is doing us good by theſe, and accompliſhing all his ſweet, good, and gracious ends upon us; and that by theſe Afflictions He is preparing us for that *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Oh, could we but believe this, and act our Faith upon *God*'s Faithfulneſs, it would help us cheerfully to bear all our Afflictions. *Lord, encreaſe our Faith.*

4*ly*, We muſt look unto and own the infinite Mercy and tender Compaſſions of the inviſible eternal *God*, in all our Afflictions; *God* is the *Father of Mercies*, a *God* of tender Mercies, of tender Bowels, *his Mercy endureth for ever*; His tender Mercies are over all his Works, and much more over his ſpecial Workmanſhip, his own Children, whom He hath begotten and formed for himſelf: He is *gracious and merciful*, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. Plenteous in Mercy; His Mercies are a great depth; Fury is not in Him towards his poor Children, *Iſa.* 27. 4. but Pity and Compaſſion; *Pſal.* 103. 13. *His Compaſſions fail not*, *Lam.* 3. 22, 23, 24. There is no revengeful Paſſion in the moſt holy God; it is He that puts Bowels of Mercy and Compaſſion into his Creatures, and then ſurely He is full of Mercy himſelf: He is *rich in mercy*, and of *great love*, *Epheſ.* 2. 4. and full of Mercy. *The Lord taketh pleaſure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy*, *Pſal.* 147. 11. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his Mercy*, Pſal. 33. 18. Let us act Faith on the Mercy of *God*.

5*ly*, We

5*ly*, We must look unto and own the Omnipotency and All-sufficiency of the invisible eternal *God*, *Gen.* 17. 1. *I am the almighty God*, Rev. 1. 8. The only Creator of all things out of nothing; He can create Salvation and Deliverance; *Isa.* 4. 5. & 57. 19. *God* being All-sufficient, can never be at a loss, nor to seek of ways to help his People in distress. He hath infinite ways of his own for helping us, either immediately from himself, or by raising up other means (and those it may be very unlikely, yea, contrary) to deliver us. God is most honoured by us when we see nothing, but rather all contrary to that we look for, Refuge failing, Friends, Flesh, Heart failing, then, to shut our Eyes to all Creature-helps, and look altogether on *God's All-sufficiency*, and only relye on that. God can convey himself more comfortably to us, when He pleaseth, without means, than by means.

This our eying and owning God's Almightiness and All-sufficiency, will work in us an *holy awe* and *filial fear* of Him: Who would not fear such a God? *Luke* 12. 5. And also it will breed an holy confidence in him: *Psal.* 9. 10. *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* "O my Soul, look "up to *God's All-sufficiency*, He can in a moment "turn thy Darkness into Light, thy Sorrow into "Joy; He can make dry Bones live; He that "breaks can bind up; He that takes can give.

This is the best way to glorifie *God* in the day of our Visitation; to trust in him, and relye upon him; though He kill *all* our Comforts, yet to believe He can supply, He can provide; as said *Abraham*, so *Psal.* 107. 33, 35. Whatever our case be,

let us take heed that we deſpond not, nor caſt away our confidence, but reſt upon *God's All-ſufficiency. Truſt in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength,* Iſa. 26. 2, 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee.*

6ly, Let us eye and own the infinite Wiſdom of the inviſible eternal God: He that ſends and orders all our Afflictions, is the Wiſe God, the Only-wiſe God, the very Fountain of all Wiſdom; 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. He ſhews his Wiſdom not only in his general Providence governing the whole World, but in all his ſpecial Providences towards his People, and that in reſpect of their Afflictions. For,

1. *God* knows beſt how to order our Afflictions to us, and that (1.) as to Time, when to ſend them; (2.) as to Kind, what ſort of Affliction to ſend; (3.) as to Meaſure, how much to ſend; (4.) as to Duration, how long to continue them: *Rev.* 2. 10. and to what end and purpoſe. He is a moſt wiſe God.

2. He knows beſt how to ſupport and comfort his People under *all* their Afflictions, and when to comfort them; He knows their Frame; He knows their Souls in Adverſity; He knows their Need and their Strength; and hath regard to all this. 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. *He is the God of all conſolation.*

3. He knows beſt when to deliver; even then, when it ſhall make moſt for his own glory, and his Peoples greateſt good; 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. and ſurely that muſt be the beſt time.

4. He

4. He knows beſt how to make Afflictions work moſt for our good; how to bleſs them, and to make them Bleſſings to us, that we may have cauſe to bleſs him for them.

Now, we eye and own the Wiſdom of God in our Afflictions, when by the conſideration of it we are kept from maligning and fretting at the Inſtruments or Cauſes of our Afflictions, ſaying in our Hearts and Tongues, *Let* Shimei *curſe, let Enemies perſecute and plunder, &c.* All theſe are but Swords, Staffs, Rods in our moſt wiſe and loving Father's Hand: Theſe Loſſes, Sickneſſes, &c. do but execute the Will and Wiſdom of *God*; and when we make no haſte to get out of our Troubles, nor uſe any unlawful means, but quietly and contentedly referr all to the *Holy Will* and *Wiſdom of God*; and when we can wait with Patience upon God, and ſtay his time, and hope in Him only for an happy iſſue; reſigning up our *Wills* to his *Will* and *Wiſdom*, to do with us, to diſpoſe of us, and of all our Comforts, as He pleaſeth: By ſo doing we ſhall be ſweetly ſupported under *all* our Troubles. " Lord God, of thy abundant Grace, " and by thy Almighty Power, work in us this " bleſſed frame, and keep us in it *till Death*, that " thou maiſt be glorified by us.

7ly, and laſtly, Let us eye and own the love and goodneſs of God in *all* our Afflictions: We are apt to look moſtly to the Anger and Diſpleaſure of God in our Troubles, which indeed we ought to be ſenſible of, and deeply affected with, becauſe we have ſinned againſt Him, and therefore ought we patiently to bear the effects of his indignation, *Mic.* 7. 9. and to humble our ſelves under his mighty Hand, to *repent of*, and *turn from our evil*

ways, Lam. 3. 40. This we muſt do, but this is not *all* our Duty; but we muſt alſo look up to the love of God, and to his goodneſs, from which our Afflictions come; *Pſal.* 89. 33. *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth:* Pſal. 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth.*

For, as our Afflictions have a bad Cauſe, as bad as may be, even our Sins. *Lam.* 3. *Wherefore doth the living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?* Yet they proceed from a good Root, even the Love of God: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten,* ſaith our loving Lord Jeſus, *Rev.* 3. 19. He loves when he takes, as well as when he gives. He takes in love; and this believed and conſidered, will very much ſweeten every bitter Cup: The believing conſideration, that the love of our Father, the love of the Mediator is in every Affliction; that every Cup that comes to us, paſſeth firſt through his Hands, who loved us, and gave himſelf for us, (for through him are *all* things) this conſideration will ſupport us: *Lord, encreaſe our Faith.*

So much of the ſecond Counſel, *viz. To reſign up our Wills to the Will of God in all our Miſeries.*

III. The laſt Counſel to Chriſtians, in order to their ſupport and comfort in their Afflictions, is this:

Aim at *Communion with God,* and *Conformity to him in all your Actions:* Look unto the inviſible eternal God, and labour for Communion with him, and conformity to him. It is conformity to God that fits us for communion with him. The more conformity to him, to his holy Nature, and to his

his holy Will, the more communion we ſhall have with him; and the more we are like him, the more will he manifeſt himſelf unto us; and the more we obey him, the more fellowſhip we ſhall have with him. *John* 14. 21, 23.

And alſo, the more communion we have with him, & the more communications we have from him, the more conformable we ſhall be to him, and the more we ſhall be like him; 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. Communion with God will transform and change us into his Image more and more; and the more we have of his Image, the more pleaſure will he take in us, and the more delight will he take to communicate himſelf to us: The more holy, heavenly, humble, meek, patient, loving, merciful, peaceable we are, the more like him we are; and the more we are like him, the more of his *love* and *likeneſs* will he continually work in us, and manifeſt unto us. This is the Life of true Religion; this is to live the Life of *God*, to live in communion with him, panting and longing after conſtant Influences and Communications of his Life, Spirit, Love, Grace, Peace, and Comfort from him; and giving up, ſurrendring up of our *Hearts* and *Souls* to him, ſpending our beſt thoughts, deſires, affections, hopes, truſt, joy, and delight upon him.

Always minding, that it is God in Chriſt that we muſt thus look unto and mind, in *all* theſe particulars; God in Chriſt, not God ſimply conſidered, but *God* in *Chriſt*; for, *God* cannot be comfortably thought upon out of *Chriſt* our Mediator, in *whom alone he is well pleaſed*: No Communion with *God*, but in *Chriſt*; no Communication of any good from *God* to *us*, but in *Chriſt*; and by his Spirit. It is the inviſible eternal *God*, by the inviſible eter-

eternal Son of *God*, and through the invisible eternal Spirit, that we must make *all* our Addresses unto, and expect *all* Communications of good from.

It is *Christ* alone that must bring *God* and the *Soul* together: In *Christ* we are reconciled to him, even by the Blood of his Cross; 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *Col.* 1. 21. And being reconciled to *God* by him, we have Peace with *God*, and then have Communion with him.

In Christ, *God*'s Nature becomes lovely to us, and ours to *God*, otherwise there is an utter Enmity betwixt his pure and our impure Nature. *Christ* hath made up the vast gulf between *God* and *us*; *He drank of the brook in the way*, *Psal.* 110. last.

Aim at, and thirst after Communion with *God* in *Christ*, in all your receipts of Mercies from him, and in all your returns of Duty to him: Pray and pant, that all that you receive from him may come to you from his Love in Christ. Oh, that this Mercy, that this Affliction, may proceed from God's Fatherly Love in Christ Jesus! so in all your Approaches to God, in Ordinances and Duties, pray and pant after Communion with God in Christ; Oh, that I may meet with God in this Ordinance, and in this Duty! without which we should not be satisfied in any.

Ordinances and Duties, and all outward Blessings, are but visible temporal things; we must look beyond them and above them, unto God in Christ, for the invisible eternal love, and grace, and blessing of God in them. So holy *David*, *Psal.* 63. 1, 2, 3. *That I may see thy power and thy glory*, saith he. And Vers. 8. *My soul followeth hard*

after

after God; to ſee God's power, and love, and grace in Ordinances. So *Pſal.* 42. 1, 2. *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God.* This is the marrow and fatneſs of God's Ordinances, and this is that will ſatisfie the Soul; therefore this is the thing that our Souls ſhould long and breath after, that we may have ſights, ſweet ſights of the inviſible eternal God in Chriſt, in Ordinances and Duties, and taſts of his love and goodneſs in them.

And if we have Communion with God in our Mercies, we *ſhall* be able *thankfully* to receive them and *fruitfully* to improve them for God: And alſo, we ſhall be enabled patiently and comfortably to bear *all* our Afflictions, and profitably to improve them.

Now, if we would have Communion with God in Chriſt, we muſt look well to theſe things, *viz.*

1ſt, We muſt *labour to be pure in Heart*, for ſuch as are pure in Heart, and *they only*, *ſhall ſee God*; God in his Son, God in his Ordinances, in his Providences, and in Glory at laſt. If we regard Iniquity in our Hearts, God will not hear our Prayers, nor afford us any Communion with him. *Mat.* 5. 8. A pure Heart is a new Heart, an Heart purged by the Blood of Chriſt from the guilt of Sin, and purified by his Spirit; *Acts* 15. 9. An Heart renewed and ſanctified; a ſingle, ſincere, and upright Heart, that hath pure Principles planted in it, the Spirit of God, the Fear of God, the Love of God, Faith in God and Chriſt, Chriſt formed there, the Image of God ſtamped there, the Kingdom of God ſet up there: Theſe are the true Principles of Purity of Heart and Life; and alſo an Heart ſet and bent by the Rules of God's

God's pure Word, that pure Rule; and that acteth for pure ends to please God, to bring Glory to him, to do good to others, and to enjoy God in our Salvation: Such may expect sweet Communion with God, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16, 17. the Lord God Almighty *will walk and dwell with such.*

2*ly*, We must labour to be poor in Heart, poor in Spirit, *Mat.* 5. 3. broken in Heart, contrite in Spirit, *Isa.* 57. 15. O, the wonderful condescension of the high and lofty one, who dwelleth in the Heavens! that He should stoop so low, as to dwell in the broken Heart, to revive such Hearts, such Spirits; O, the Revivings of God, they are Soul-satisfying things: The Consolations of God are not small: Happy indeed are those Souls in whom the great and glorious God dwells; Blessed Souls that are the Temple of the holy God, Habitations of God by the Spirit; 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. *Eph.* 2. 22. *Isa.* 66. 2. To the man will God look that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit; and God's looks on such are sweet looks, Love-looks; such shall have much communion with God and Christ, for Christ was sent to bind up the *broken hearted*, *Luke* 4. 18.

What a comfortable support is this to a poor afflicted Christian, that is poor in this World, destitute of Friends and earthly Comforts, restrained and shut up in Prison, or otherwise confined to Chamber or Sick-bed, and withal, is *poor in Spirit*, is content in this condition? Yet now, in this his desolate condition, he may have Communion with the great God; he may enjoy the blessed and sweet Company of the Lord Jesus by day and by night, even when Lover and Friend is put far from him; even then his God is near him, his everlasting Father

ther is with him, his dear Lord and Redeemer, his sweet Saviour and loving Husband is with him; *Psal.* 25. 15, 16, 17, *Psal.* 102. 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. He will never leave them, nor forsake them.* Yea, He will then speak most comfortably to their poor Souls, *Hos.* 2. 14. He will speak to their Hearts; He knows their Souls best in Adversity, and their Souls know him best then: Jesus Christ will then shew them his Love, and manifest it unto them, and support them.

3*ly*, If we would have Communion with God in every condition, we must labour to be upright in Heart: *Psal.* 125. The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon him in truth; they shall have Communion with him: *He loveth truth in the* inner parts; *He that walketh uprightly shall dwell in God's tabernacle*, and abide in his holy hill, *Psal.* 15. 1,2. God hates *Hypocrisie*: Oh, the guile and falshood of our hearts, let us bewail it, and cry to God with *David*, *Make my heart sound in thy Statutes.*

4*ly*, Be heavenly in heart, be heavenly-minded; such shall have sweet Communion with *God*; such as have their *Conversation in Heaven*, have converse with God, *Phil.* 3. 20. We must be very watchful, that the World do not lye too near our hearts, nor lodge too long in our hearts, for that will steal away our hearts from God, and hinder our Communion with him: We must take heed, that our hearts be not at any time over-charged with the Cares of this Life, but let us labour to keep the *World* and our *Hearts* asunder; for those things that are visible and temporal, will darken our sight of God, if we let them into our hearts; and they will drive God out of our hearts,

if we entertain the inordinate love of them.

Covetousness is Idolatry, because it sets up the Creature for a God in the Heart; 1 *John* 2. 14, 15. *He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Keep a strong Watch then against this present evil World, and suffer it not to get into your Hearts, if you will maintain your Communion with *God* in *Christ*.

5*ly*, Be much in the acting of Faith, Love, Hope, Joy in the Lord: Be much in praising *God*: By the exercises of these graces we enjoy *God*, and *God* communicates himself to us. Oh, labour to live in the lively exercise of Faith: Christ dwells in the Heart by Faith; *Eph.* 3. 17. *Gal.* 2. 20. Labour to believe the Love of *God* in *Christ* to your Souls, in giving his Son to be a Sin-offering for us: *John* 3. 16. 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. And this believing, it will warm and inflame your Hearts with Love to God again, and so you may enjoy much sweet Communion with *God* and *Christ*; *John* 14. 21, 23.

In the Actings of our Love to *God* we shall meet with more Manifestations of *God's* Love to us. Where and when we open our Hearts to *God* and *Christ*, and give them our Loves, there and then will *God* and *Christ* open their Hearts to us, and give us their Loves; *Cant.* 1. 2, 3. & *Cant.* 7. 10, 11. There is a mutual Manifestation of Love to each other; no Love is lost between Christ and his Spouse: *If any man open to me*, (saith Christ) *I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me*; *Rev.* 3. 18. Now, by the exercise of Faith and Love, we open to Christ; he is always ready to come in: *Open your everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in*, Ps. 24.

6*ly*, Be

6*ly*, Be very watchful: Watch, and *keep your hearts with all diligence*, *Prov.* 4. 23. Take heed; let not the World nor Vain Thoughts lodge there. Take heed of wandring from *God*; watch your words, watch your ſteps; take heed, grieve not, quench not, reſiſt not the Holy Spirit, for by him *God* communicates himſelf to your Souls; carefully obſerve all his Motions, and ſtill beg his aſſiſtance in all your Duties, and reſt upon his Aid, without which you can do nothing.

7*ly*, And laſtly, If we would maintain our Communion with God, (which is our *Heaven upon Earth*) we muſt look well to our whole Converſation, that that be ordered aright, for to ſuch *God will ſhew his ſalvation*, Pſal. 50. 23. *God* looks for a well-order'd Converſation, a Life order'd by the Rule of his Word, ſetting narrow Steps to our Feet, looking ſtraight on, *not turning aſide to the right or left hand*, Prov. 4. 25, 26, 27. nor *wickedly departing from his way*, Pſal. 18. 21, 22, 23. but to be righteous, juſt, honeſt, faithful, upright, charitable in all our dealings with Men, and carefully performing all our Duties to GOD and Man in ſingleneſs and integrity of Heart. This is a well-order'd Converſation.

Alſo, in our Converſation, we muſt mind two things:

1. That we have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, *Epheſ.* 5. 11. that is, no more than need; no intimate Familiarity and Communion with them, leſt thereby we loſe our Communion with God; no more Communion with the Wicked than Piety, Charity, and Ne-

Neceſſity will allow. Too many have loſt Communion with GOD, by their too intimate Communion with the Wicked. *Away from me,* ſaith holy *David, all ye workers of iniquity.*

2. That we break not Fellowſhip with, nor withdraw Communion from the People of God, from thoſe that bear his Image, although differing from us in ſome circumſtances. In the Communion of Saints we may have Communion with God; *Pſal.* 16. 2. God is among his People, he walks in them, and dwells in them. Our Love muſt be not only to thoſe of our own Opinion, but to all Saints and profeſſing Chriſtians, and muſt hold Communion with all thoſe with whom we may charitably judge, that Chriſt holds Communion; were this well minded, it would do much to heal our ſad and ſinful Breaches; *Heb.* 10, 24, 25.

And thus we have ſeen, how that our looking unto inviſible eternal things, eſpecially unto God in Chriſt, and maintaining our Communion with them, we may be ſweetly born up, and comfortably ſupported under all our Troubles.

O *Moſt holy, moſt merciful, moſt gracious Lord God, Father Almighty, and my moſt loving and tender-hearted Father in my moſt dear and ſweet Redeemer Jeſus Chriſt; I render Thee my moſt humble and hearty Thanks and Praiſe, for lengthning*

ning my days, and for ſupporting me with thy Special Goodneſs, in this poor Work; for giving me ſometimes hours, ſometimes half-hours, and ſometimes days of ſome Strength and Eaſe, between thoſe many ſad and painful Diſtempers upon me, ſince I began it. And I moſt humbly beſeech thee to write theſe Truths on my Heart, and keep them there, that by the aſſiſtance of thy good Spirit they may be effectual to ſpiritualize, raiſe, and fix my poor, cold, dead, carnal Heart upon thy bleſſed Self in Chriſt; and be pleaſed to vouchſafe me ſweet, ſenſible, and conſtant Communion with thy ſelf in Chriſt, for thy Mercies ſake, that thereby I may glorifie thee in this my day of thy Viſitation, and may be throughly ſanctified by, and comfortably ſupported under all my Troubles. Amen.

TO ALL MY

Christian Friends

IN

DARTMOUTH,

Or elsewhere;

That desire to know the true state of their never-dying Souls: In order to their making clear and sure their Interest in the *Lord Jesus*; Grace and Peace.

BEfore I had finish'd the foregoing Treatise, there came to my hands, by *God's good Providence*, some Papers of very great concernment to all our Souls for Eternity, being the Conclusion of a Discourse by that Eminent, Learned, and Pious Servant of the Lord Jesus, Mr. *John Flavel*, whose Works praise him, and of whose Presence and Labours, we that knew him by Face or Works, have continual cause to lament our Loss; which Discourse was from 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. con-

concerning Self-examination about a Man's Intereſt in Chriſt: Which Papers when I viewed and reviewed, I bleſs God, I felt ſo much power in the Contents of them, and ſo much ſweetneſs, that I thought not fit to eat my Morſels alone, but was ſtrongly impreſt to make them publick, which here by the conſent of his dear Relations, I preſume to do, hoping it will awaken thoſe that did hear thoſe cloſe-trying Truths, to be more exact in their trying Work, and may alſo excite others to due diligence in that ſo profitable and too much neglected Duty of Self-examination. Thoſe Characters in this will help us againſt Self-deceiving: Do not read only, but pray earneſtly for the Spirit's help, and do no longer delay this Work, leſt thou be cut off before thy Work be done, and what will become of thee then? That this, with all other Helps to thy Soul in the way to Heaven, may do thee good, is the unfeigned Prayer of thy unfeigned Friend,

James Bardwood.

The Reverend Author having preached many profitable Sermons on the 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether you be in the Faith, &c.* in which he induſtriouſly and clearly ſhewed the neceſſity of Self-examination, the nature of the Duty conſiſting in a ſecret Debate of our eternal eſtate and conditions within our own Boſoms, wherein the Mind of a man ponders and weighs all that makes for him or againſt him, in an even Ballance. The Object-matter of this Debate is things eternal, the eternal concern-

ments

ments of his Soul, as likewiſe the manner of the performance of this Duty, with greateſt ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity ſetting the perfect Law of *God* before us, and humbly imploring the ſpecial Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit. Men are to debate theſe two things; 1*ſt*, Whether they are in Chriſt, or in the ſtate of Nature: a great Queſtion indeed, upon which hang all our Hopes of Heaven, *Chriſt in you the hope of glory*, *Col.* 1. 27. *2dly*, If we be in Chriſt, what condition we are in, whether thriving in Grace, or decaying. In the firſt of theſe Queſtions the painful Author ſpent many Exerciſes in the reſolving of, in laying down, opening and anſwering eight ſeveral diſtinct Rules of Tryal of a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt, with the ſeveral Objections that poor doubting Souls might make againſt themſelves; things highly worth the publication, as I perceive by ſome imperfect Notes taken from him, which, becauſe I cannot attain to a more exact Copy of them, I muſt omit them, the more is the pity: But for the ninth and laſt Mark, I find more full and perfect, and therefore only offer this one to your conſideration, concerning which hear his own words.

As to this ninth Mark, of a Saving Intereſt in Chriſt, I have this to ſay, That if the Lord ſhall clear but this one Tryal, I do not value whatever Objections you have againſt any of the former: This will undoubtedly ſpeak your Souls intereſt in the Lord Jeſus, without any more ado; and as far as the Lord ſhall clear it to you, you may venture your Souls into Eternity upon it.

And

And therefore try your selves by this, if any of you be sincerely and fully resolved upon full conviction of your sinful and miserable state by Nature, and the answerableness of Christ to all your Wants; to let go all that hinders the enjoyment of him, and embrace all that furthers the enjoyment of him. You need not make any Doubt or Question after this, Whether Christ be yours, or you be his: Consent is essential to Marriage; there can be no Spiritual Marriage to Christ, but by consent of the Will. Knowledge is essential to Consent; he that doth not think and know, cannot consent. If you be therefore consenting and willing to be Christ's upon his own terms, there remains no Doubt whether Christ be yours after that Consent. *Hos.* 3. 3. *Thou shalt be for me, so also will I be for thee.* Christ is for you if you be for him: And when the great Work of Conversion is expreſt in Scripture, you find it expreſt under the Act of the Wills Consent, in the 110th *Psalm* 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.* That is, of thy Spiritual Off-spring; and this is brought about by consenting to take Christ upon his own terms. But Beloved, don't mistake your selves, I am not about to shuffle over so great a concernment as this is rashly; I am well aware my own and your Salvation too is carried in the matter I am to discourse, and therefore I resolve, in the Strength of *Jesus Christ*, to be impartially faithful between *God* and *us*, in this great matter. I would not for ten thousand Worlds a word should drop from my Lips, to the ruine of any

any Soul, nor yet to disturb the Peace of any gracious Soul, and therefore let me explain what I have to say clearly. There are three things of absolute necessity for the gaining of a solid Scriptural Interest in Christ, the two first I hope will pass current with most of us, yet some may stumble there.

1. The first is this: There must of necessity be a full and serious conviction of Sin and Misery without Christ; there's not a Soul that comes to him without such a conviction: The Spirit, when he cometh, he shall convince the World of Sin and of Righteousness, *John* 16. 9. that's the Spirit's first Work, and 'tis fundamental to all his After-works: And therefore you shall find in all the Converts in Scripture, the Lord has been dealing with their Understandings first, to convince them of their sinful and miserable state by nature. And the Lord Jesus professedly tells us, *He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.* Convinced Sinners, not those that think they have Righteousness of their own; and that the whole have no need of a Physician, but they that are sick: And it must needs be so, that Christ must take his course, because his Commission leads to it; *Isa.* 61. 1, 2. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath sent me to preach glad tydings to the meek, to bind up the broken in heart, and proclaim liberty to the captives.* These are the persons upon whom Christ is to act the great work of Salvation; they are said to be such as are bound with the sence of Sin, such as are broken hearted through the sence of their Sin and Misery: And when he invites Men and Women to come to him,

see how he doth it, in the 11. *Matth.* 28. *Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest:* These are the persons Christ bestows himself upon. So that there must be such a conviction of Sin and Misery by Nature, as leaves us without Hope, without Christ. I don't speak of the degrees of spiritual Trouble, but I take this to be an unquestionable Truth, that so much Conviction as unbottoms the Soul from Self-righteousness and False hopes, is absolutely necessary; and before this is, there can be no Match between Christ and the Soul. If any man be married to his own Righteousness, Duties, and Performances, that Soul hath nothing to do at all with Christ; nor can that Soul be married to Christ, for 'tis married to the Law, another Husband; as you may see in the Sixth of the *Romans*, the Apostle in that Chapter proves to us, that we can have nothing to do with Christ until we are divorced from our own Self-righteousness. That's the first thing, and this, I hope, the Lord hath wrought upon many that are here before him: The Spirit of Illumination hath been upon us, shewing us what miserable Wretches we were, and struck down the Foundation upon which our Hopes were built before.

II. The second thing that is to pass upon every Soul, in order to his Union with Christ, is a full Conviction of the Answerableness and Fulness that is in Jesus Christ, to all the wants and spiritual necessities of the Soul. This you must see, or you will never consent to take Christ for your Lord: *Acts* 4. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under Hea-*

Heaven, whereby we may be saved. Here's your Refuge; Christ, and none but Christ, can answer the Necessities of my poor Soul. I am full of Guilt, and there is no Righteousness but in Christ to justifie me; I am full of Filth, and there is no Holiness but in Christ to sanctifie me. To this Refuge therefore in Christ, God shuts up every Soul as to his last Hopes: Therefore you find in the 3d of *Galat.* 23. we are said to be *shut up unto the Faith*: So that we see no other way in the World to escape Hell, but at this Door, the Lord Jesus. This also, I trust, the Lord hath made evident to so many Souls of you as are in Christ. You see your absolute need of him, and you see in Christ a compleat fulness to answer all the wants of your Souls; that you are shut up to him, and have not the least hopes hanging upon any other Object besides Christ. Well, that's the second thing.

III. To come to the main, for all these are but previous Works, and may signifie something or nothing; the third thing that gives an Interest in Christ, is a deliberate Consent to part with all things that hinders the enjoyment of him, and to embrace all things that promote and further the enjoyment of the Lord Jesus. Such a Consent as this is, will put your Salvation quite out of doubt, if there be any in the World, in Christ, 'tis the Soul that deliberately consents. Now therefore to open this, remember,

1. First, That here must be a deliberate Consent; it is not a Work to be done *Hand over Head*, as we say, rashly, and so to repent afterwards,

to retreat, and call back our Consent afterwards; when we shall meet with something in Religion that we did not look for, there must be a deliberation of the Will. There be many men that hang between willing and unwilling, they do and they do not consent: In some things they can, and in other things they cannot come up to the terms of the Gospel, when the Mind and Judgment of a poor Christian hangs in a doubtful suspence: I would, and I would not; This I could close with, and That I cannot. Here's the undoing of Men. And this was the case of *Agrippa*, *Almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian.* I could go a great way to be a Christian, but I cannot come off roundly to all the Terms of Jesus Christ: What shall we do in such a case as this is? Thy Soul sees Sin and Misery upon one side, and Salvation in *Christ* upon the other side; willing thou art to suffer a little for him, but there be some things in Religion they cannot come up to. Now

[illegible] many Half-christians, which is called, a *Cake not turn'd*; which doth but make Hypocrites in Religion. That's the first thing in *Consent*, Deliberation in the Judgment, pondering the Terms of *Christ* throughly.

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2. The second thing in this *Consent* is, that a *Christian* must heartily resolve to let go all those things that hinder the enjoyment of [illegible] and blessed be he of the Lord, whose will [illegible] to this, that there is nothing so dear in the [illegible] but he is resolved it shall go; for I must tell [illegible] Brethren, there be some things of which [illegible] saith, *If ye seek me, let these go their way.* So [illegible] you seek *Christ*, there be some things that must go, and some things that may go. Now, those things that are to be parted with in order to the enjoyment of *Christ*, are of two sorts, first, some things are absolutely necessary to be cast off without any more ado; and there are some things conditionally necessary to be parted with; that is, if God's Glory, Truth, and Honour require our parting with them.

First, To begin with the first, there are some things absolutely necessary to be renounced without any *Conditions*; there must be no Scruple as to these things; and they are such as these:

(1.) First of all, Sinful Self, and all base Lusts of our Hearts and Natures: These must be renounced, or we can have nothing to do with *Christ*: The profitable and pleasant Sins, that are as right Hands and right Eyes, you must part with them, *Christians*, if you will have *Christ*, for *Christ* and *Sin* cannot reign together. Pray look into *Rom.* 6. 19, 20, 21. and you shall see the necessity of this; *As you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, so now yield them up to God, as instruments of Righteousness, unto holiness.*

see the absolute necessity of giving Sin a discharg from all further Obedience, or else we cannot be the Servants of the Lord Jesus. *Christian*, I do not say, when thou receiveſt *Christ*, thou shalt never commit a Sin more; no, no, but that which I mean is this, That thou must from henceforth provide for Sin no more, indulge Sin by the consent of the Will no more; you must not continue the actings of it deliberately; you must hate every alse way, and the consent of your Wills must be to *Christ*; that's the first thing to be let go, or you cannot have an interest in the Lord Jesus.

(2.) The second thing that is absolutely necessary to be renounced and parted with, in order to an *Interest in Christ*, is all our own Self-righteousnes; you must let that go too, else *Christ* and you will never agree: That Idol must down, Self-righteousnes must be universally and heartily renounced and abhorred. 'Tis plain from *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness.* You see Self-righteousnes must go to the Dunghil, all our own Duties must be renounced, all natural and acquired gifts must be renounced, never to look at Self in whole or in part, in point of *justification*; if you do, you can have nothing to do with the Righteousnes of *Christ*; *Rom.* 10. 3. the *Jews* being ignorant of God's Righteousnes, went about to *establish* their own Righteousnes. Here you see a perfect opposition between a Man's *establishing*

blishing his own Righteousness, and getting an interest in Christ. Friends, you must not think of two Righteousnesses, one in Christ, and another in your selves: *I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* Down with all Self-righteousness, or you can have nothing to do with Christ.

(3.) The third thing that is to be let go for the Lord Jesus Christ, are all Companions in Sin: How much Delight soever you have formerly had in them, you must henceforth make them no more your delightful chosen Associates. Here's the parting Point between wicked Men and the Saints of Jesus Christ. I don't speak of Civil Commerce, as Men in the World, there we must have to do with wicked Men, but I speak of chosen delightful Companions in Sin, when 'tis an Act of the Will; 1 *Pet.* 4. 3, 4. *Wherein they* wonder *that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.* Ay, here's the breach made, when we come to Christ, between us and the wicked World; *Psal.* 15. 4. ——— and so you shall find in *Psal.* 119. 63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee.* Beloved, Christ requires you to cast off the delightful company of wicked ones; Christians are a company of themselves, and none but such should be chosen: *All my delight is in the Saints*, saith *David.* Whatever Tyes there be, unless it be those of natural and civil Relations, they must not tye us to wicked men, but we must be the Companions of the Servants of Christ, if we will have Christ.

Secondly, There are some things that may be let go, or may not; that is according as God calls, or calls not for them: If the Glory of God shall require

quire it, then we are to part with them; and these are all Earthly Comforts, if so be they come to be inconsistent with the Truths or Glory of *Christ*: rather than deny the Truths of *Christ*; when his Glory or Enjoyment comes in competition, then *Christ* requires us to part with them. Such are our estates, when the Glory of the Lord Jesus shall call us to deny them, as the believing *Hebrews* were. Such are our Liberty, when we cannot keep it without the eclipsing the Honour of the Lord Jesus: Yea, such is also our natural Life, if that be laid in ballance with the Truths of Christ. He would not have his People reckon their Lives dear upon his account; either I must deny the known Truth, or my Liberty, Life, or Estate must go: And now, if any of these come in competition with Christ, they must all go: *Luke* 14. 33. *Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* This includes Estate, Liberty, and Life. Now, here is the stick in the case, How far a poor Soul can come up to *Christ's* Terms, upon this Conditional Necessity? I do not doubt, but there be many Souls in *Christ* that have many Fears about it, what their Hearts will do; many shaking Fears what they will do in an hour of Temptation; yet *Christ* hath the consent of their Hearts, that *all shall go*; they will forsake Father, Mother, Wife, Children, "Why "Lord, saith a poor Christian, if I cannot enjoy "these without the destruction of my poor Soul, "in thy Strength I resolve to follow thee in the "deepest paths of Self-denyal, to the last breath." And without this you cannot be Christ's Disciples.

My Friends, the Lord Jesus hath set down the Terms, and he will not come lower, and if you cannot come up to his Terms, Christ and you must part, he will not come down for the sake of any man; therefore consider of those things. Now, he that is contented to part with *all*, rather than part with *Christ*, that *Soul* is for *Christ*, and *Christ* is for that Soul. But there is the last thing, and that is, the embracing of all those things that may help you to enjoy *Christ*: These are deep tryals of the Heart, and therefore it concerns us to make deep searches here. Well then, there be four things that do further a man's Soul in the way to *Christ*, and are you contented, and that deliberately, *Christians*, to embrace them all to help you to *Christ*?

1. *First*, Are you contented to embrace and welcome all the Ordinances of God and Duties of Religion, both publick and private, without exception of one of them? Can you [illegible] to all his Ordinances [illegible]

not neglect a Duty, [illegible] every Duty, if you [illegible] der the Law of his House.

2. *Secondly*, Are you contented to [illegible] Fatherly Corrections from the hand of [illegible] the killing of the Remainders of Sin in you? [illegible] you

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you will be for *Christ*, you must submit to *Christ*'s Method: It is in vain to say, If I can travel to Heaven without meeting a Storm in the way, I am willing to go; thou must be contented with all Afflictions, to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Paul* could say, in 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in persecutions, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong.* Ay, that was a high frame; I will not strain up your Experiences to *Paul*'s; But, can you consent to endure them? Can you bear a Rod from God when it is to purge your Corruptions? Can you bear a Persecution from God, without starting from your Duty?

3. *Thirdly*, If you will be *Christ*'s, you must submit to all those means *Christ* hath appointed, for the mortification of your *Corruptions*, be they never so hard, Rebukes from GOD, Rebukes from Men, by Afflictions, and by the Word, for the mortification of Sin? Can you say, *Christians*, that you are willing to have your *Mistakes* detected by GOD or Men, your *Corruptions* discovered, any thing that helps to the pulling up the Roots of *Corruption*? Surely thus it *must* be, if you will be for *Christ*, all faithful Admonitions, all necessary Afflictions.

4. *Fourthly*, and lastly, If you will be for *Christ*, and be his, you must embrace all pains, watchings, and labourings after Holiness, to the end of your days: Holiness will cost a *Christian* abundance of Labour, but this you must do, or you cannot be *Christians*. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having these promises, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,*

per-

perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Here's the Work of a *Christian*, *cleansing Work* and *perfecting Work in the fear of God*, to the end of our Lives. You must take the pains that other *Christians* do if you will have *Christ* for your Portion. Now mark what I say: He that is willing to part with all that hinders the enjoyment of *Christ*, as sinful Self and righteous Self; and he that resolves to embrace all things that may help him forward to the enjoyment of *Christ*, as all the Ordinances of *God*, all Fatherly correction from the hand of *God*, all means of mortification from *GOD* or Men, and all pains for Holiness; he that is contented with these terms is as surely *Christ's* as ever was any Soul. I have not made the terms in one point higher than *Christ* hath made them.

And thus I have shewed you *Christians* what the Terms are, in which you are allowed to enroll your selves in the *Catalogue of Christians*. And, oh that the Lord would set home this one tryal to the satisfaction of our Souls, then we may say, *The Lord is my God*, and *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

FINIS.